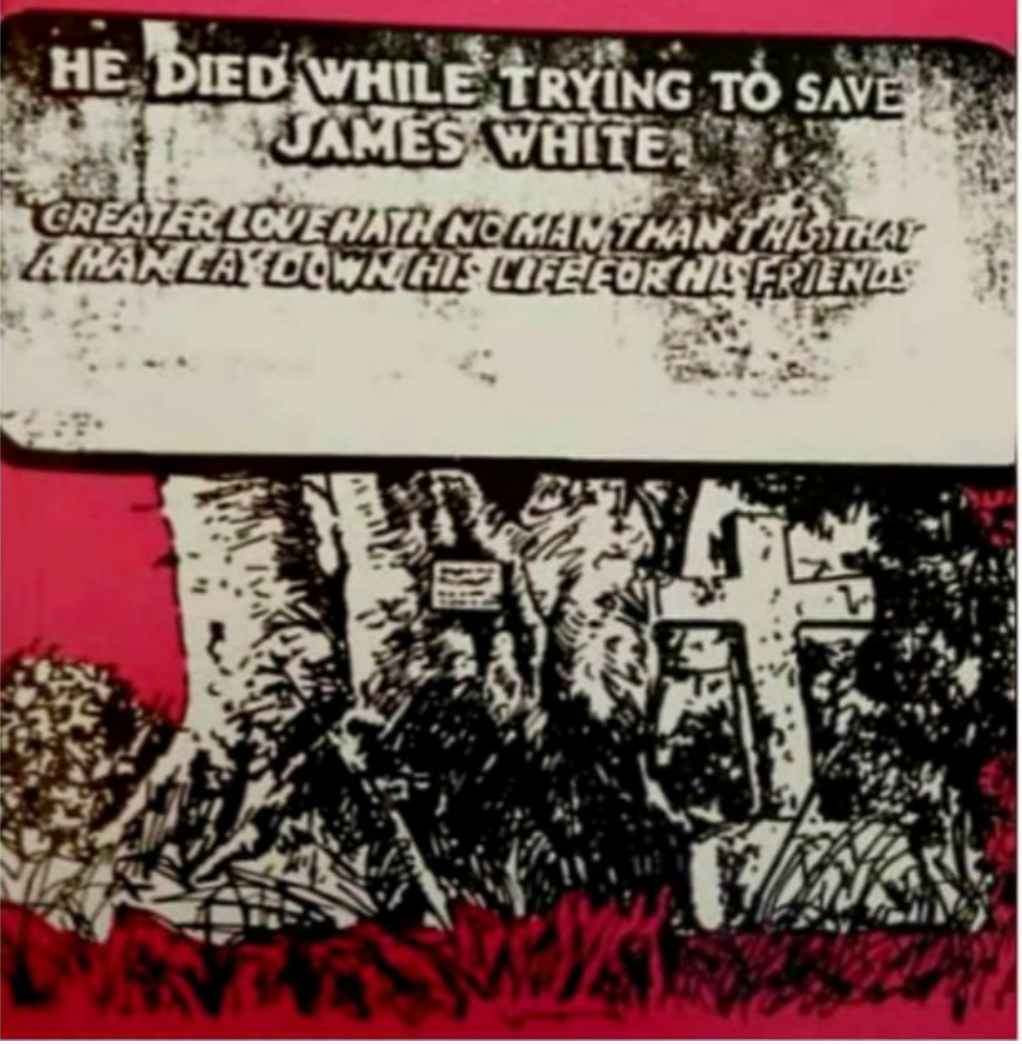
MODUMEDI MOLELI

Revd Brandon Graaff



In May 1892 Modumedi Moleli, an elderly man of Sotho origin, volunteered from his home in the northern Transvaal, to go to Mashonaland as a teacher under the newly established Methodist Mission there. After three years of hard work at the village of petty chief Nenguwo, about seventy kilometres south-east of Harare he was killed in an uprising against the white settlers and their associates; but not before his scholars had developed a taste for learning, or before some foundations had been laid for his station to become a well known educational centre under the name of Waddilove Training Institution.

The story of Moleli has unfortunately escaped most Zimbabwean writers. Moleli's life and work are commemorated annually at Waddilove Training Institution, Marondera, Zimbabwe on Moleli Day, 24th June, but little is known about him, even within the institution. The author of this biography is indeed filling a gap.

Makers of Zimbabwe
5

1. Our Struggle for liberation — J. Tongogara
2. John R. Bradburne of Mutemwa — J. Dove
3. Bernard Mizeki of Zimbabwe (Eng., Shona, Ndebele) — L. Snell
4. Jairos Jiri: the man and his work — June Farquhar

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MODUMEDI MOLELI

Teacher, Evangelist and Martyr to Charity:
Mashonaland 1892-96

by

Revd Brandon Graaff

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INTRODUCTION

In May 1892 Modumedi Moleli[1], an elderly man of Sotho origin, volunteered from his home in the northern Transvaal, to go to Mashonaland as a teacher under the newly established Methodist Mission there. After three years of hard work at the village of petty chief Nenguwo, about forty five miles south-east of Salisbury, he was killed in an uprising against the white settlers and their associates; but not before his scholars had developed a taste for learning, or before some foundations had been laid for his station to become, in later years, a well known educational centre under the name of Waddilove Training Institution.

"The story of Moleli", writes R. Hodder-Williams, "has unfortunately escaped most Zimbabwean writers."[2] Moleli's life and work are commemorated annually at Waddilove Training Institution, Marondera, Zimbabwe on Moleli Day, 24th June,[3] but little is known about him, even within the Institution. Apart from the specialised interests of one or two people, the general information about his life is limited to a short inadequate account in a primary school textbook.[4]

Prior to the commencement of this study no attempt had been made to gather into one account either the oral tradition or written information which has from time to time circulated about him; or to see how a number of deep currents created a whirl of tragedy in which a good man died. And consequently no attempt had been made to assess his contribution to local educational and evangelistic work from a point of view independent of the settler tradition. This latter point is important. When a biography appeared in 1966 of Bernard Mizeki, an Anglican catechist who died in the same revolt in 1896 as Moleli, it was presented as a definitive account.[5] On closer examination, however, it showed little sympathy with the spirit of the resistance of the Shona to the imposition of settler rule, and assumed a onesided justification of the white man's cause which, to say the least, is no longer adequate for the historian who intends to do justice to a neglected aspect of African worth.

Had the present study been commenced ten or fifteen years earlier, testimony could have been obtained from people who were Moleli's associates; and in particular from his own family, his wife and daughters Efa and Emily, each of whom died in Moleli's home at Mpahlele in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains where they rise in the northern Transvaal.[6] Zacheus Musonza, Mrs Annie Marwodzi, and Andrew Shamu also died before their memories could be probed and sifted, though they have left valuable fragments of information. No survivors have been found of those who participated in the rising in 1896 in this area. The only remaining people who knew Moleli personally are Mrs Samukazi Mangachena, who was probably about ten or eleven years of age when Moleli died, and her younger sister, Mrs Efa Mafema. The former was less imaginative though an honest witness; the latter not only has a vivacity and a gift of description which has brought Moleli to life, but also an understanding of Shona traditions, beliefs and customs which have helped to illuminate the depths of the culture into which this elderly Christian teacher so eagerly came. During the later stages of the preparation of this dissertation contact was made with Mr Pfani Shamuyedove who was a youth residing at Nenguwo during Moleli's day; but his contribution has been disappointing.

In addition to these primary oral evidence, primary documentary evidence has been located and is listed in the section on sources at the end of this work. To my knowledge all the sources of information about him have been traced, but it is very much to be hoped that more will be uncovered. It is a matter of regret that so little has been found giving detailed colour to his personal life; but what has been found is sufficient to lay bare the values and motives in Moleli's own life, as well as those of the people to whom he came. Modumedi Moleli was hardly literate and no written records have been located originating from him.

This study has been continuously marked by the discovery of details and insights which have contributed to making a more complete picture of Moleli's character, his background, and the environment into which he came. Sometimes the information has come from original letters, sometimes from a word dropped by some elderly person in a distant village, or appeared in documents unexpectedly found in archival searches, or through the contemplation of apparently unrelated facts. Whether a man of great gifts is on the trail of truth which will enrich the learning of many in the academic world, or a more humble person of lesser attainments tracks down an explanation of forgotten

currents of local interest, the pleasure which accompanies the achievement of deeper understanding is the same.

The word 'teacher' used in the description of his work is to be interpreted in the widest sense. Moleli's whole presence among the people of Nenguwo was educative in one way or another. It is to be hoped that this study has given us as complete a picture as we can get at the present time of Moleli's work, however lacking it is in details of personal interest. Into the story has been woven background material which gives us some insight into the reasons why, in spite of his possessing qualities which would have been an asset to any community, he was identified, in the minds of those who were inspired to a violent rising, with the foreigners who had unlawfully possessed their land, taken their cattle, and subjected them to indignity. So he had to die.

The text of this publication was completed twenty years ago. Apart from minor alterations it has been left exactly as it was then because so much has happened since then in politics and research that it would be quite impossible for me to bring it all into line with present scholarship. Hopefully, its contents will shed some light on events in a small corner of Zimbabwe nearly 100 years ago.

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(1) Moleli's family at Mpahlele, Northern Transvaal, say the correct spelling of the name is Modumedi Moledi, and the correct pronunciation is Molumeli Molili. I have retained the spelling as Moleli because this is the spelling used from the beginning in Mashonaland.

(2) R. Hodder-Williams, **Marandellas and Mashona Rebellion,** in Rhodesiana (the magazine of the Rhodesia Society) No. 16, July 1969, p.52.

(3) The real date of his death is 21st June, calculated on James White's last letter. See Ch. 13.

(4) In developed countries biographical material gets into school text books only after considerable study by serious historians. In a society moving out of the pre-literate stage use must be made of whatever promising material is at hand, even before it is finely sifted.

(5) Jean Farrant, **Mashonaland Martyr, Bernard Mizeki and the Pioneer Church.** (Oxford University Press 1966.)

(6) Emily was the child who 'died and was buried in the hill Mutandara', but who revived and many years later was reunited with her mother in a remarkable manner. The story is given in note 3 at the end of chapter 14.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my indebtedness to all persons who have willingly given such information as they had and who allowed themselves to be subjected to continuous cross-examination. Without their co-operation this project would never have come to a successful conclusion.

To the Officers of the Methodist Missionary Society who freely made available to me the relevant historical documents, and to the National Archives, Harare, who did the same.

To the late Revd Fr W.F. Rea, SJ, who read my work with interest, offered me continuous encouragement, made important suggestions, and saved me from making some serious errors of fact. Of course, all the mistakes are mine.

To Mrs S.F. Musson who has kindly typed the manuscript.

But most of all to my wife, Lorna, my companion in labour whose self-sacrifice I never deserved.

If there is any dedication it has to be to Modumedi Moleli's spiritual heirs and successors, the Methodist teachers, evangelists and village christians who were always a greater inspiration to me than they knew. Nor can I forget those who followed in the evangelical succession of Isaac Shimmin and John White.

CHAPTER 1

THE TEACHER IS BLOWING HIS HORN

The sight of an African man, in the full dress of the white 'foreigners', blowing a kudu horn and being followed by a jubilant and happy group of Shona children in their own deep brown traditional dress skipping and dancing behind him, on their way to school in the heart of Mashonaland in 1893, would have brought forth comment from both indigenous people and settler alike. The response of the Shona observer would have been at several levels, some deeper than others, but one certain observation would have been that here was a man whose legs were wrapped in 'bags', [1] a person 'without knees' and, at first sight, a black man in a white man's dress.

At that time the number of African teachers in the whole of Mashonaland might not have exceeded two dozen. There were eight Methodist teachers and according to Isaac Shimmin, the senior Methodist missionary whom we shall meet again later, there were seven or eight Anglican teachers. [2] The Salvation Army contingent consisted of six men and two women (making a fine band) but there were no African teachers included among them.[3] The Roman Catholic church too had established a mission but they did not at this time use specifically African teachers. In 1891 the Dutch Reformed Mission established itself with a 'large number' of native agents stationed mainly south of and encircling Fort Victoria. [4] The exact details of all these teachers, the overwhelming majority of whom were academically ill prepared church catechists and preachers, is not strictly relevant, but all of them (except possibly for Bernard Mizeki who found 'relatives' near his station) were foreign, brought in by the missionaries from the south. They were without knowledge, to start with, of Shona customs or the Shona language. For the most part they were scattered in lonely and isolated places under the protection of chiefs or sub-chiefs who had accepted them, among people for whom the concept of teacher was unfamiliar. Nonetheless, in those early days, before the Shona recognised the coming of the whites as the occupation the latter claimed it to be, and at a time when the two traditions met each other with

good humour and favourable expectation, those Shona clans which allowed Christian teaching to begin did so with some genuine readiness to learn about what Shimmin called 'the religion of peace and goodwill'.[5]

Modumedi Moleli, the Methodist teacher who is the subject of our study, was permitted by chief Nenguwo to open a school in his village in May 1893. If we were to watch Moleli we would see him lead his children, singing as they go, in between the huts perched among the rocks of the fortified ridge upon which the chief's village is situated. From the main fortifications at the high point of the ridge, the hill falls sharply to the vlei and the stream below where the gardens are. This defence is part of the fortress of Masvingo, a complex built during or just prior to the 19th century as refuges, perhaps particularly against Ndebele raids;[6] but also as a defence in the times of not uncommon inter-tribal feuding or against military pressure from the Portuguese from the east or from such trader adventurers as the predatory Gouevia.[7]

Many early travellers have described how these Shona villages, of which Nenguwo's was typical, appeared in the last century. Revd Owen Watkins, who led the Methodist Mission into Mashonaland in 1891, describes how they were built high up among the rocks of rugged hills, and of how it was almost uncanny to hear sounds from these fastnesses; mothers scolding, babies crying, men talking, boys and girls laughing and playing, yet all of them hidden from sight.[8]

Moleli goes on leading his children like an African Pied Piper, sometimes blowing his horn and sometimes breaking into song,

Tinodisa kunyeverwa
Nhau dzakanaka
Nezva Jesu Muchengeti
Akauya panyika.[9]

the words of which he has translated into the vernacular. The children join in vociferously, clapping and skipping as they go. They weave their way along the winding paths, in the shadow of the rocks, down towards a large fig tree on open ground beside which is a small hut built in Shona style — Moleli's first temporary home. Arriving at the tree, all those whom the teacher has drawn along behind him sit under its shade, the younger ones in front, and the older ones behind. The school has already been

open for two or three months and the scholars are made up of about seventy-five boys and an equal number of girls, plus, according to Synod statistics of 1893, about 150 men and women.[10] All these people have come to school.

Apart from these statistics and the oral evidence of two elderly sisters, Mrs Efa Mafema and Mrs Samukazi Mangachena, then probably about five and eight years of age respectively,[11] we have little direct information on the conduct of this particular school. However, by inference from what we know about Moleli's educational background, about his age and about the conditions into which he came, we can see that his school was very similar to that opened by Michael Bowen in 1892 at Epworth Mission, nine miles to the south of Fort Salisbury. Michael Bowen was the African catechist from the south who accompanied Isaac Shimmin and Owen Watkins to Mashonaland to establish the Methodist Mission in 1891.[12] A photostat copy of a poor reproduction of a photograph taken in 1892 by Isaac Shimmin of this school gives an idea of the outward appearance of the Methodist schools at that time, the conditions under which they were conducted, and their limitations.

On examining the picture we noticed first of all that it is literally an all age school; anyone who presented himself, young or old, was welcome in the class.

There was no upper limit to numbers, the one teacher dealt with them all. Later on, when Moleli's family arrived from the Northern Transvaal, he was assisted in his work by his daughter Efa, then about fifteen years old, who had some elementary education in South Africa.[13] Except for such group practice mentioned by Shimmin in describing the progress of the Epworth school — 'after breakfast forty or fifty adults and children sat down in groups to study the mysteries of the alphabet' — instruction was given to the school as a whole and was shared without differentiation between boys and girls, men and women.[14] Apart from the book held in the hand of the teacher, either the Bible or a Xhosa spelling book,[15] and the chair on which the teacher sits, there is no sign of any equipment used for learning purposes. At that time individual missionaries of all denominations were engaged in translating the New Testament and denominational service books into Shona; and individual teachers, having no printed resource material, were forced to improvise and provide

for themselves whatever they needed. The children have no materials for play or individual learning. Visual aids and furniture are provided almost entirely by nature, as is virtually the whole of the teaching environment. In the background is the famous wagon, used temporarily as a store for food and property. The teacher cooks and sleeps, for the time being, in the round protective shelter built from the branches of thorn trees in front of which the class work is taking place. More will be said later of the depth of the task, in almost all respects far beyond Moleli's capacity, which he cheerfully undertook.

The scene poses many questions about the origin and activities of the Methodist Mission in Mashonaland; the relationship of this lonely teacher to the settlers and to those whose country the settlers had declared theirs, first by concession and then by conquest; and the light in which the tribesmen interpreted his presence among them. We wish to know something about the people who have opened the educational door within their own highly independent society, their past, their values, their expectations; about the conflicts which have not yet emerged but which are inherent in this situation. We turn our thoughts to the teacher and ask questions about his origins, his personal resources, his objectives, and methods, all of which information should contribute something to our understanding of how it was that this eager but gentle Christian was given a 'clamorous' welcome in May 1893; but lay dead, in the pit from which the people dug their clay for plaster, on Sunday June 21st 1896.

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1. The Mashona themselves did not wear trousers. Note the reaction to Dr Livingstone's dress in Philip Mason, **The Birth of a Dilemma.** (OUP 1958) p. 23
2. Isaac Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 8.3.'93.
3. Isaac Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 27.1.'92. Gale W.D. **One Man's Vision.** (Hutchinson London 1935) p. 119
4. du Plessis J. **History of Christian Missions in South Africa.** (Longmans Green London. 1911.) pp 287-90.
5. Isaac Shimmin, report on **The Mashonaland Mission** received in London 19.12.'92 p 2.
6. For a description of the construction of these fortresses see A. Whitty, **A Classification of the Prehistoric Stone Buildings** in South African Archaeological Bulletin, Vol XIV, No. 54 (June 1959)
7. For an interesting account of the activities of this colourful half-caste towards the end of the nineteenth century see Farrant, **Opus cit.** pp 112-114; Maughan R.F.C. **Zambezia** (John Murray. London 1910) pp 139-143; Brendon N.J. **Chiuzingu** NADA 1959
8. Revd Owen Watkins, **Mashonaland Journal,** Methodist Missionary Society, Archives, London, Unpublished.
9. Mrs Maria Luwanika, wife of Petros Luwanika, a student at Nengubo Training Institute 1900.

We love to be told the good news
Of the Saviour Jesus who came to earth.

10. Minutes of Mashonaland District Synod, 1893, Methodist Archives, Salisbury, Rhodesia. The figure for the average weekday attendance at public worship is given at 300, but there may be grounds for hesitating to take this figure at face value. In those days school and worship were not differentiated.
11. Mrs Mafema, the younger, says that she used to follow the teacher blowing his horn, accompanying the scholars, but was too young in the early stages to benefit from the instruction. Interview 24.5.66.
12. Revd Owen Watkins, **Mashonaland Journal** .The original copy of this work is in the Archives of the Methodist Church of South Africa, Livingstone House, Grahamstown.
13. Revd George Eva to Revd Marshall Hartley 24.6.94.
14. Isaac Shimmin, report **'Our First School in Mashonaland, (Archives** of the Methodist Missionary Society, London) 7.7.93.
15. South African Methodism was at that time most firmly based in Xhosa speaking areas and such educational books as then existed were in Xhosa. All informants talk about the Xhosa 'Chipelling' (Spelling) book. Patrick Gusha, formerly chairman of the Rhodesian Senate of Chiefs, in an interview on 9.5.66, recalled that James Anta, his teacher of Zulu origin, had a Xhosa spelling book.

CHAPTER 2.

THE REGIONS BEYOND

On September 12th 1890, the Union Jack was raised in Mashonaland within the bounds of the military camp out of which the city of Salisbury was later to grow. It was a sign, to those present at least, of the addition of Mashonaland to the realms of the British Queen, and brought to an end an adventurous journey in which 200 pioneers and 500 police had cut a way for themselves and their wagons over a distance of 400 miles into the heart of a wholly new region.[1]

After the final parade and dismissal of the historic band, the men either set about building themselves temporary homes in the new town, using mud, poles and grass; or began fanning out into the countryside, each man armed with the 'right' granted by Cecil Rhodes, to a farm of 3,000 acres and fifteen gold claims.[2]

By the time Revd Owen Watkins, Revd Isaac Shimmin and Michael Bowen arrived there on 29th September 1891, Salisbury had all the appearance of an active pioneer town in spite of the ravages of malaria following the rains of 1890-91. Wagons and their drivers, carts, horsemen and pedestrians moved up and down the straight main street flanked with tents and various huts and corrugated iron buildings which the men had put up, using whatever materials were to hand. Everything was very primitive, and food was dear.

Though many of the settlers were disappointed that their hopes of finding gold in quantity never materialised, there was an air of hope, adventure and comradeship which gave the town its identity and character. This remained true in spite of the depressing effect made on some observers by the rather makeshift and deteriorating physical arrangements.

The imagination of the Empire had been fired by Cecil Rhodes' gamble in sending the pioneer column to open up and occupy Mashonaland, and by the exciting possibilities of gold, far exceeding the already rich finds of the Witwatersrand, to be discovered in the new country. So too, had the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the Transvaal seen the human opportunities of the extension of its work right up to the Zambesi.

As far back as 1873, when three men were appointed to the Vaal River Mission, there is a footnote in the Notices, 'We wish to remind our readers that this is a trial mission, to ascertain whether we can occupy the vast country between the Vaal and the Zambesi River'.[3] In 1888 Owen Watkins, the man responsible for the Wesleyan Mission work in the Transvaal, was still trying to persuade his London Committee that they should avail themselves of the 'present openings to extend our missions in the Transvaal to the Zambesi'.[4] Unhappily the state of missionary finances at the time precluded action; but in 1890 Watkins was again saying 'we have a solemn duty to those native tribes who are now being brought into contact with the white man'.[5]

The breakthrough came when Isaac Shimmin, a young Methodist minister stationed at Klerksdorp, met Cecil Rhodes personally and received from him a "distinct promise on behalf of the Chartered Company of substantial practical help supposing one of our men is sent to the North".[6] Rutherfoord Harris, for the Chartered Company, confirmed the promise and explicitly offered one hundred pounds sterling annually for the purpose already stated.[7]

Watkins took the matter up personally with the London Committee and Shimmin wrote directly to them also, expressing his deep desire to be sent to Mashonaland.[8] Watkins was concerned about the success of the mission, and took some care in setting out to the officers of his society his considered opinion about its leadership. His first choice was George Weavind; but if he were not acceptable he proposed the Revd Applebe, an experienced missionary, a good linguist and a devoted man. He was certain Shimmin should not be sent. 'He is very popular amongst white men and would do well for the chaplain to white men. As a leader of the mission he would fail, being easily cast down and turned back in his work by difficulties'.[9]

When the Missionary Committee came to examine the call it had before it only three aspects of information, namely the case for going into Mashonaland, the offer from the Chartered Company, and Shimmin's letter offering himself; but not Watkins' careful setting out of the merits of the various candidates to lead the mission. That was contained in a post bag which had been lost between Kilnerton and Pretoria. The Committe did not wait for guidance; it made an early decision and on the 13th March sent

Watkins a telegram 'Shimmin to Mashonaland'. Watkins was astounded, but loyally accepted the decision. He had already told the Committee that for health and other reasons he could not possibly go to Mashonaland; but so important was it to make the mission a success that he decided to offer himself to take Shimmin to Mashonaland and to spare no pains to make his appointment a success.[10] This decision nearly cost him his life, as we shall later see, and justified a colleague's comment that he had a 'heart of a lion'. One wonders whether it would have made any difference to Moleli, five years later, if a post bag had not been lost.

On 2nd June 1891 the wagon left Kilnerton Institution near Pretoria. It was driven by John Peters, led by John Waters (a man of mixed race), and carried Michael Bowen (a first class linguist) and Isaac Shimmin. Watkins followed by coach later and joined the party at Good Hope Mission near Pietersburg.[11]

Shimmin, who had been fired by the adventure and romance of the expansion in Mashonaland, had the previous year received a personal invitation from F.C. Selous, the guide to the pioneer column, to accompany the column, but had to decline the invitation.[12] Now his dream was on the verge of fulfilment.

The journey to Salisbury has been interestingly described by Watkins in his journal. It was not without its strains, for the older man did not take lightly to the younger's carelessness over his personal property, nor did he share Shimmin's devotion to hunting. 'S. out all day shooting, but the Lord was very gracious to the buck, none of them were hurt'.[13] But in spite of the irritants of the generation gap the two men and Michael Bowen were wholly united both in their objectives and in the appreciation of the historic nature of their journey. It is not necessary here to examine their experiences, their preliminary attempts to get some vernacular vocabulary, or the notes they made of the country through which they passed. What was important was their attitude to the Shona people, for their attitude must have had some effect on Moleli who was to participate in the work under Shimmin's superintendence. 'The people' wrote Watkins, 'are a superior but very gentle spirited folk'.[14] Shimmin, in a passage typical of his outlook, wrote in a letter, as they approached Salisbury, 'The more I see of the natives the more I rejoice at the possibilities before us! ... Judging from their present attitude

they are most willing to learn and from their appearances they are likely to make sound and intelligent Christian believers'.[15]

This latter statement gives an interesting insight into Shimmin's character. It shows him as optimistic, ready to seize opportunities, and pre-occupied with religious development. In making the natives the objects of his zeal Shimmin put himself very much in the mainstream of missionary attitudes of the time. He was more interested in the readiness of the Shona to turn into his path of truth than in their beliefs, background, and customs. His statements about the people whom he was to evangelise were all in the form of generalisations which were not backed up by observations of particular people.

Very soon after arriving in Salisbury, Watkins set about securing promises of land which could be used as a base for teaching activities. The following passage is quoted extensively not only for its own sake but also because it shows how unconscious the Wesleyans were of dispossessing the Mashona of land which was traditionally theirs.[16]

> "Tuesday, 20th October. Had our cup of tea at 6 o'clock this morning, and then Shimmin and I started for the Camp. When we got there, I saw the door of Mr Rhodes' hut open, so I walked straight to it. He had just got out of bed. He smiled and said. 'Just wait a few minutes and I will see you.' So we waited until he had his bath, and put on a suit of flannels, and then in his bare feet he came to the door and invited us in. After a little talk in which I told him I was going to make a good report of the country, and that all the officers had been very kind, and that Dr Harris, the Secretary of the Company, had given me for the Missionary Society as much as he could, but that I wanted more land, he said. 'Well, let us have Harris in and see what we can do'. So out he went in his bare feet, raised Dr Harris out of bed, and also Dr Jameson, the Administrator — and brought them along just as they were in their pyjamas — their hair all tumbled and their eyes only half opened. They did look funny — and when they saw us they were astonished. Mr Rhodes said, 'Mr Watkins is not satisfied with one farm for the Wesleyan Missionary Society, he wants five or six farms. What do you say to that?' Dr Harris said 'No it can't be. I have given one

farm to the Church of England, one to the Roman Catholics, and one to the Wesleyans. If I give Mr Watkins more, then the others will come and want more.' Mr Rhodes said 'Well, we don't want a country filled with Mission stations, what do you say, Mr Watkins?' I replied I had only to do with our own Society, which was a very great one and most important in England. They must bear in mind they gave one farm to any man who would come into the country — they would give me one for myself and one to each man I might bring, if I only asked — but we did not ask for land for ourselves, but for the Society, which would have to spend a lot of money and would do great good in the country, not only to white men, but to the Natives — but we could not do much Native work unless we had land for Mission stations. Dr Harris still fought hard against it — and I answered him point by point. Then Mr Rhodes said, 'Well, Harris, you must remember the Wesleyans will do good to the country — all their people will be of the right sort — they will not bring in loafers, who can do nothing but drink whisky at four pounds a bottle'. Then turning to me he said, 'What do you say to this? Suppose we give you three farms to start with — then when you get them going, if you want more and the Mission is a success, why apply for more and I will promise your application shall receive every favourable consideration.' I said, 'Thank you, Mr Rhodes, that will do to begin with for farms. I am satisfied. Now,' said I, 'there is another matter. Dr Harris has given us four stands in Salisbury. The Free Masons have four stands in the same block — and there only remains two stands in the block — now I want you to give one of those to me for the Society and the other to the Masons. We shall then have the entire block between us — and each have frontage of three streets, and we shall be sure then not to have a Canteen or Coolie shop on the corner.' 'Oh' gasped Dr Harris, 'we can't do that — they are most valuable corners, and the Church of England has only four stands — besides, we will take care no Canteen or other objectionable place is put there'. I laughed and said, 'But you can't do that, you sell that corner, and then have no power to dictate to the buyer what he shall put on it. I think I must have that corner, and to make it complete, I think

you should give the other to the Masons.' Mr Rhodes laughed and said, 'Mr Watkins is right — we don't mind about the value of the corners — and it would make a nice square. You shall have it and the Masons shall have the other'. I thanked him and then said, 'I wish to get away as soon as possible. When could I have the papers with all the grants — so that we could have no misunderstanding in the future?' Dr Harris said, 'Well you have been very kind waiting here three weeks, you shall have documents for everything to-day. Come up at eleven o'clock and we shall have them ready. Where are the farms to be?' I replied, 'One in the Salisbury District, which is central, one in the Manica District, which is east, and one in the neighbourhood of the Chief "Magunda", which is north, and will take us towards the Zambesi.' Mr Rhodes said, 'That is first rate, you shall have them in those districts.' Dr Jameson, the Administrator, had never met me before as he had gone down to the Pungwe to meet Mr Rhodes and bring him up. He sat on the foot of the bed and looked and listened with astonishment — and never said a word. When we were coming away, Mr Rhodes invited me to call upon him in Cape Town the next time I passed through.

It was fun to see Shimmin, I had not told him what I was going to ask for or how I intended to work it, and he was simply amazed — and then delighted".[17]

This lesson was not lost on Shimmin who later on always made sure that title to land was secured to ensure that the school and church work proceeded on an adequate 'legal' footing.

Within a month of being in Salisbury the strain was beginning to tell on Watkins. With the possibility of swollen rivers cutting off his return via Tuli, Watkins and Shimmin walked 300 miles to the east to the port on the Pungwe River, in Portuguese East Africa, from where a steamer carried Watkins back to Durban. Unhappily he contracted east coast fever from which he nearly died, and as a result of which he was invalided back to England.[18]

Shimmin was now on his own. Returning to Salisbury he had an opportunity to use his skill with a rifle, for a lion broke into the shelter he was sharing with travelling companions and seized

a hunter. Unaffected by the panic, he shot the beast before any damage was done.[19]

Alone in Mashonaland Shimmin found his reserves of mental and physical energy fully released. Watkins' influence seems to have been beneficial, and at no time in his subsequent career in Mashonaland were there any signs of the depression which Watkins feared. The journeys so far taken, from the south, to Pungwe in the East and his stay in Salisbury, had given him a picture of the country. He had made a superficial contact with the Shona people, established some perception of the conditions under which they lived and the kind of difficulties which African teachers from the south might face. Writing just two months after his arrival in Salisbury he was characteristically optimistic:

> "We could find immediate work for a dozen at least native teachers at important centres. I hold the view very strongly that the best way to reach the natives is by the natives themselves, of course under English superintendence, that the more native evangelists we shall have up here the next year the better it will be for our work."[20]

This letter, sent from the heart of the embryonic state, set in motion the train of events which eventually brought Moleli as a teacher to Chief Nenguwo's village.

The letter also offers its own comment. Not only did it define a relationship between English and African in a common missionary task; but also between missionary and those to whom he came to minister, for it tended to absolve him from the necessity of entering into any intimacy of contact with those who were to be saved by the message he brought.

Any descriptions of the journeys Shimmin took after this letter will be left to other writers because, interesting as they are, they do not contribute to the present study.

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1. Philip Mason, **The Birth of a Dilemma,** (OUP 1958) p 146.
2. Ibid. p 150.
3. Wesleyan Mission Notices, 1873, No. 230.
4. Quoted by C. Thorpe, **Limpopo to Zambesi.** (Cargate Press London, 1951) p 39, but no reference given.
5. Watkins to Marshall Hartley 20.2.90; 17.12.90.

6. Shimmin to Watkins 21.11.90 (The Watkins papers, Methodist Archives, Grahamstown.)
7. Watkins to Marshall Hartley. 17.12.90.
8. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 14.2.91.
9. Watkins to Marshall Hartley 25.2.91.
10. Watkins to Marshall Hartley. 21.3.91.
11. McDonald. **Opus cit.** p 22.
12. S. Douglas Gray; **Frontiers of the Kingdom in Rhodesia.** (Cargate Press 1930) p 29.
13. Watkins, **Mashonaland Journey.** 1891.
14. Quoted by McDonald. **Opus cit.** p 16.
15. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley. 7.9.91
16. The question of Rhodes' legal authority to dispose of land in Mashonaland is discussed in a number of works. See Mason, **Opus cit.** pp 126-160 and Gann L.H., **A History of Southern Rhodesia,** (Chatto & Windus, London 1965) pp 78-79).
17. Watkins, **Opus cit.**
18. McDonald. **Opus cit.** p 27.
19. Isaac Shimmin, **Journal of the Mashonaland Mission,** (Methodist Archives London). A fuller account of this event is found in Gale. **Opus cit.** page 150.
20. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley. 29.11.91.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHERS FOR MASHONALAND

The Zoutspansberg Mountains of South Africa rise to a height of 3,000ft. and run the length of the northern Transvaal, dividing the hot, low lying Limpopo valley from the flat and comparatively dry farming land to the south. The road then used to Salisbury, from Pretoria and via Fort Tuli, passed through New Smitsdorp, a few miles north of Good Hope Methodist Mission which served the native people of the area loosely termed the Zoutspansberg. Some of the eddies of excitement of the men going north to Mashonaland, in search of wealth and adventure, must have been felt by those whose settled homes lay adjacent to the road.

By 14th May 1892, after the call for volunteers, Modumedi Moleli, whose home was at Mpahlelestad, in the northern foothills of the Drakensberg mountains, had offered himself as a teacher in Mashonland.[1]

Shimmin's letter of the previous November had been warmly supported by the new Wesleyan Methodist Chairman of the Transvaal District, Revd G. Weavind, who had gained permission from the London Committee to proceed with finding volunteers. So the call for teachers went out to all the churches in the Transvaal. While it was being taken up Weavind occupied himself with the problem of how to get those who came forward up to Mashonaland.[2]

The Mashonaland road passed partly through the Transvaal, then an independent Republic, and partly through what was to settlers and transport riders a kind of uncertain no-man's-land south of the Ndebele stronghold, beyond the Limpopo. This road, frequented by honest and dishonest adventurers alike, was to be taken only if one was able to look after oneself or, if one had a black skin, if one's white protector could be trusted to do the protecting. Unhappily the promise of easy money attracts unworthy men as well as worthy; as the Shona were soon to find out, if some of them had not already done so. Weavind, realising that it would not be safe to send native men alone because there

were "lawless men, Boers and Europeans, who think a native man has no right to anything", tried to secure the services of a personally known and trusted transport rider.[3]

Within two months eight men had volunteered.[4] Three of these, including Modumedi Moleli, Josiah Ramushu and Daniel Mochuadi, came from the Zoutspansberg, from the area covered by the Good Hope Mission. Moleli, vigorous and eager to go, was an elderly married man, while Ramushu, his cousin, was much younger. Ramushu was to end his days as a Methodist minister in Rhodesia, where he succumbed in the influenza epidemic of 1918. The other five volunteers came from the Witwatersrand Mission.[5] It is interesting to note that all the volunteers came from areas where Shimmin had worked or was known, for he was stationed in Johannesburg in 1891 and had extensively visited the Zoutspansberg in 1890.[6]

The Christian background of Moleli's family within the Mpahlele clan of the Baralong tribe[7] makes quite a remarkable story, beginning in 1867 when Samuel Mathebathe left his home at Mpahlelestad in search of employment and the white man's money in Natal. There he fell under the spell of an eloquent Methodist preacher, James Allison, with the result that he felt impelled to devote himself to the Christian way as expounded by his missionary mentor. He returned, zealous in his new found faith, and threw himself into preaching it within his own clan. It was not surprising that the tribal authorities began to regard this new teaching as some threat to their stability and withdrew permission for public preaching. Undeterred, Mathebathe devoted himself to house to house visitation. Four years later, following the installation of a new chief, he was allowed to continue his evangelistic activity. Two chapels were soon built and out of this Christian fellowship grew the hitherto unknown desire for learning, in the form of reading the scriptures, through which a deeper knowledge of Christ might be individually obtained. To do this teachers were needed; after offering prayer in the New Testament fashion of seeking divine guidance, two men were chosen and they were sent off to walk 700 miles to the Paris Evangelical Mission in what is now called Lesotho. There they received two years of training in reading and preaching. From there they returned to commence their work.

Persecution was still part of the daily experience of the Christians; more than once their school and chapels were burned down and rebuilt. Nevertheless, their patient faith held firmly that one day the missionary would come to their support, and that their days of isolation would soon be over.

Their greatest test was still to come. Twins were born to Christian parents. When the news was out the inevitable demand came, supported by authority and custom, that one of the children should be yielded up. Mathebathe refused to do this. When one of the children died this was a confirmation to the tribal elders that their tribal spirits had demonstrated their power over the new faith. Again they demanded the body, but still the gallant leader of his flock stood his ground; and to protect the body of this tiny child he walked with the father, carrying the pitiful burden, many miles to the nearest known mission station there to bury it and secure its permanent safety. On the return he found himself and his Christian community, a total of 200 people, driven into exile.[8]

It was then, in 1885, after nearly twenty years of persecution, suffering, and living by faith, the missionary arrived, none other than the redoubtable Owen Watkins.[9] Deeply touched and moved, he stood amongst them at last and these Christians, at once both valiant and weak, felt their faith and prayers had been answered.

Within the context of the conflict of faith and custom, Moleli had grown up and reached the height of his powers. We do not know exactly what relationship Moleli had with Mathebathe but there is no doubt that his Christian profession and allegiance arose out of and was strengthened by the experience of this Christian community prior to the coming of the missionary and the establishment in 1885 of the Good Hope Mission as a refuge for these exiles.[10] During this period he grew to have confidence in his faith, to work out some of its implications for himself, and to stand as an independent Christian. He learned that by standing against numerical odds he was supported by a faith which in the end counted and gave him victory; he found strength in his belief that the tribal spirits were subject to the Spirit of Christ. This earlier experience goes a long way in explaining why later in the loneliness of his station in Mashonaland he was able to exhibit this continuing tradition of independent initiative, confident out-going

love and steadfastness in the face of a potentially violent opposition.

None of the Mashonaland volunteers was well educated even by mission standards of those days, though they were better educated than the pioneer teachers used in the Transvaal itself twenty years before.

'All of them are able to read and most of them to write also,' wrote Weavind,[11] the successor to Owen Watkins as the Chairman of the Wesleyan Methodist in the Transvaal. We cannot tell from any of the reports made later by missionaries whether or not Moleli could write but it seems a not unreasonable surmise that such education as he had received came from the teachers sent to what is now Lesotho for training. There is no doubt that his education was rudimentary.[12] George Eva recorded that the scholars at Nenguwo 'were able to report the alphabet,'[13] and Mrs Mafema recalls that when the children could write *amai* (mother) on the ground they were given slates, but possibly she was thinking of a period after the death of Moleli.[14]

As a group the volunteers were described as 'earnest, devoted and godly', and 'just the type of men to make good evangelists'.[15] This letter of Weavind's is one of many illustrating the Methodist habit of seeing all native evangelists not as individuals, hardly ever mentioning their names. Moleli, for instance, will not be mentioned by name again during the whole of his period of service; only after his death will his Christian name be used in private or official correspondence or journals. This relationship may be contrasted with the intimacy of relationships Bernard Mizeki enjoyed with his white colleagues in the Anglican church.[16]

The most reliable description of Moleli's appearance is probably that given by John Kapuya, who said he was tall and thin.[17] He was light skinned, like a person of mixed parentage[18] declares Mr P. Shamuyedove. Mrs Mafema describes him as about 5'9" in height, clean shaven and with a small moustache, saying also that he was active and vigorous, moving quickly and energetically about his business.[19] This description fits the records.

The photograph of the six teachers was taken, one assumes, on their arrival in Salisbury, for only six arrived together. The names of the six were not given in the publication from which the picture has been copied and so we have no certain knowledge as to which

one was Moleli.[20] Either the man second from the left or second from the right seems to answer to the description of tall, thin, and elderly.

Weavind's anxiety over getting a passage for the men increased, for the period between the rains, when the rivers and drifts were passable, gave very little time for wagons to get up to Salisbury and back in safety. This short period was rapidly passing, and he wished to avoid a year's delay. In the end he was lucky to get places on the last wagon leaving for Mashonaland together with a firm promise of protection to Fort Tuli; from whence arrangements were made for a respectable transport firm working between Fort Tuli and Salisbury to get the men to Mr Shimmin.[21]

By the last Sunday in May arrangements had been finalised. Before setting forth on the following Monday two valedictory services were arranged, the morning service in the African area in Johannesburg, and the afternoon one in 'the town chapel'. These events attracted great interest (though only three men were leaving from that city) and the churches were packed on both occasions. The men spoke in a 'manly, simple, straight forward manner', and in the congregation there was a highly emotional atmosphere which was to them the sign of the special presence of the Holy Spirit whose presence provided a fitting send off for the first representatives to the regions beyond.[22]

On the Monday the men joined their wagon and were on their way. At Smithsdorp they picked up Modumedi Moleli, Josias Ramushu, and Daniel Mochuadi, and from there they proceeded to what was to them the unknown.[23]

What were their thoughts on the journey? As they passed along the pioneer road south of the Ndebele centres they must have sensed the familiar apprehension. One surviving informant who came up with the group of wives in 1893 caught something of the atmosphere in her exclamation, 'We were afraid of the Ndebele! They could come at any time and kill us.'[24] At that time the Ndebele king was having great difficulty in restraining his *impi* (regiments) from getting involved in military action against the settlers to demonstrate their traditional authority. In addition, while he accepted that white people were under the white man's law, Lobengula insisted that black people were under black people's law.[25] Hence these catechists, thinking very much in the

African fashion, knew that if they were an offence to the king in passing through his territory, they could expect no mercy.

Nor was it only the king's *impi* they feared. One night, says Mrs Malau, as they slept in their thorn branch shelters adjacent to the wagon, a lion roared and leapt among them. It took away a man who screamed helplessly. They never found his bones.[26]

When the wagon arrived in Salisbury in August, the teachers found they had been preceded by a few days by the Revd George Eva who had travelled by Chartered Company coach at Company expense.[27] The strategy was that Eva would relieve Shimmin who would make reconnaissances into the country, with the object of establishing church and school work.

While awaiting these reinforcements Shimmin had secured a farm nine miles to the south of Salisbury, which he named Epworth after the parish in which the father of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism had served as a clergyman in England. On it was opened the school we have already discussed. Here the new teachers probably found accommodation in the homes of the friendly families who had become associated with the school through the religious work of Michael Bowen.

The welcome the teachers received, the impression the new country made upon them, and the opportunity it seemed to offer of doing work they had set out to do was such that by mid November, after his return from visits to chiefs Lomagundi and Zvimba to the north, where four of the teachers were left, Shimmin was able to write, 'the native teachers are very anxious to have their wives up next year. They are greatly pleased with the country and have offered to extend their initial offer of a two year term of service.'[28] He hoped that some would settle in the new country.

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1. George Weavind to Marshall Hartley 14.5.'92.
2. Weavind to Marshall Hartley 25.3.'92.
3. Weavind to Marshall Hartley 25.3.'92.
4. Weavind to Marshall Hartley 14.5.'92.
   Only five of these were eventually to accompany Moleli.
5. Minutes of the Transvaal District Synod, 1892.
6. Minutes of the Transvaal District Synod. 1890-91.
7. "The Bechuana is a term which embraces five distinct tribes, each ruled by an independent chief. These tribes are, taking them

according to their locality, from south to north, Battaping, Baralong, Bangwaketse, Bakwena and Bamangwato." **Bechuanaland and its tribes** in "Work and Workers of the Foreign Field," 1892, p 326. This country is now Botswana.

8. Findlay and Holdsworth, **A History of the Methodist Missionary Society,** Vol. 4. (Epworth Press, London, 1922) p 337 gives the full account.

9. "East and West, North and South, went this indefatigable Chairman, wherever he went he found the same story, of some African born into newness of life through the ministry of a missionary hundreds of miles away, then returning to his own people and setting himself to proclaim the Saviour of all men until he had built up a little church of believers, waiting in confident hope that some day God would send them a teacher..." Findlay and Holdsworth, **Opus cit.** p 336.

10. Ramushu, Moleli's companion teacher in Rhodesia and a close relative, came from a village adjacent to Moleli's which Ramushu's father had founded as a result of his ejection from his traditional home subsequent to his having received the Christian faith. Ramushu's son, William, at present living in Rhodesia, declares that Mathebathe's work was in Mpahlelestad, Moleli's home. See also Whiteside J, **A History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in South Africa,** Vol. 2. (Elliot Stock, 1906) p 426. "In 1885 Good Hope farm was bought for £1,000 as a resting place for the Pahlahla tribe of the Baralongs". (Mathebathe's christian exiles.) Mpahlelestad was a town of 10,000 inhabitants and the home of Moleli. This is confirmed by J. Thabane, Moleli's grandson, in a tape recorded interview made in December 1968.

11. Weavind to Marshall Hartley. 14.5.92.

12. Interview Jeremiah Thabane, December 1968.

13. Eva to Marshall Hartley, 27.9.93.

14. Mrs Mafema, interview, 9.6.67.

15. Weavind to Marshall Hartley. 14.5.92.

16. Farrant, **Opus cit.** See, for example p 123 where he is mentioned affectionately six times in Knight-Bruce's diary.

17. **Ibid.** p 138.

18. Phani Shamuyedove, Interview. 3.1.69.

19. Mrs Mafema, Interview, 18.3.67.

20. Mochuadi, Ramushu, and Moleli were in the original party; but the names of the other three are not known. By 1896 there were ten Methodist African teachers in Mashonaland. Their names are given in Thorpe, C. **Limpopo to Zambesi.** (Cargate Press, London, 1951.) p 54.

21. Weavind to Marshall Hartley. 28.5.92.

22. Weavind to Marshall Hartley. 28.5.92.

23. Weavind to Marshall Hartley. 21.5.92.

24. Minnie Malau, Interview 12.9.65. Unfortunately she was unable to help much as her mind was failing at this time.

25. L.H. Gann, **Opus cit.,** p 110.

26. Minnie Malau, Interview 12.9.65.

27. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley.

28. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 18.11.92.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROZVI PRAYED AT THE NAMELESS TREE

While Moleli was preparing himself to be a teacher in Mashonaland, life in the area in which he was destined to settle proceeded in its traditional manner. What were some of the outstanding historical and religious features of the cultural environment into which this teacher, without clear knowledge of what lay before him, was preparing to throw himself with such eagerness?

By the 19th century the *muti usina zita,* the standing local symbol of Shona tradition, was already ancient and gnarled.[1]

It stood against the azure horizon on high ground half a mile to the south of Nyachiswa hill in which chief Nenguwo had his residence. Four men, it is said, could only just join hands around its trunk. Through the bole of the tree a hole had been burned by the countless fires made on annual ceremonial occasions which had their origin somewhere in the deeps of the past. Possibly it stood fifty feet high, taller than any tree known to the local people; and large enough to command the interest of the Rozvi, the traditional political and religious overlords of the land. Even from Wedza mountain, it is reported, a man who depended upon hunting for a livelihood could make out its shape on a clear day. Around it were the derelict *pise-de-terre* huts of the Rozvi who came to pray there annually in October for rain.[2]

At the present time one can stand on the rocks beside the stump of the original tree, from which the fresh shoots put out their bright spring time green, and look far across the fertile upper Ruzawi river valley. On the far side of this valley, through the soft violet haze of the distance, can be seen the craggy mountain valleys leading up the granite strewn hilltops in which the Mbire tribe traditionally found shelter. This is the heart of Mbire, the central province of both the Mwene Mutapa kingdom of the Karanga, which reached its height in the 15th century, and of the Rozvi kingdom, which was at its peak of power in the 17th century. To see this time-honoured and conspicuous tree in its perspective a broad backward look must be taken at some of the major political and religious developments which affected this part of Mashonaland, from the beginning of the emergence of

the Rozvi right up to the eve of the appearance of the white settlers in 1890.[3]

When the fifteenth century opened the Karanga, made up of a number of patrilineal Bantu clans including the Rozvi and under the leadership of a chief bearing the title of NeMbire, occupied the central areas of the present day Mashonaland, an area known to them as Mbire. These Karanga were descended from immigrants who originated in the area of the Great Lakes. Early in the 14th century they crossed the Zambesi and made their way via Guruuswa, the area roughly making up present day Matabeleland and the south western portion of present day Mashonaland, to Mbire, possibly bringing with them their own ancestor cult and also the cult of Mwari, their high deity. In Guruuswa and Mbire they cultivated the land, bred cattle on a small scale and lived in modest stockaded villages made up of thatched huts and granaries.

At that time the militant and aristocratic Rozvi were on the threshold of their emergence to power. Their centric state was yet to be. It would be administered by Rozvi appointed chiefs and have as its capital the stone walled city known today as Great Zimbabwe.[4] In the centre of this Great Zimbabwe was to be the sacred sanctuary which the Chaminyuka,[5] the link between Mwari and the people, spoke from the rocks and through the air.

Round about 1440 A.D. the then king of the Karanga state, Mutota Nyatsimba, under pressure of over-population, undertook an extensive military campaign which gave him control of virtually the whole present day Zimbabwe. Just before this period of military activity and expansion he moved his royal residence to his new "house of stone" at the head of the Zambesi escarpment in the present Chipuriro district and earned for himself the praise name of Mwene Mutapa ("Master Pillager"). The programme of the subjugation of the tribes south of the Zambesi and right up to the Indian ocean was vigorously pursued by his son Matope who reigned with his own sister Nyamita from about 1450 to 1480. Matope's skilful execution of his father's policy brought about the golden period of the hitherto mythical empire of Monomotapa, so often represented on Portuguese maps and in the writings of their explorers.

Before moving his headquarters Mutota Nyatsimba had confirmed his brother Togwa[6] in a position of vice-regal responsibility

under him. In effect this decision seems to have led eventually to the establishment of the well-known Togwa dynasty in the southern province and laid the foundations in some ways for the establishment of the Rozvi kingdom. Not only is Togwa regarded in the Rozvi tradition as taking a major part in the building of the Great Zimbabwe[7] but this approximate date is, interestingly enough, also assigned by radio carbon dating techniques for the introduction of the finer Q type walling.[8] According to Mbava, the paramount chief of the Rozvi who died in June 1927 at the age of about 110 years, this Togwa was the grandson of the first Rozvi chief, Tumbare,[9] who had his residence at the *Muti usina zita.*[10]

The object of this part of the study is not to build up a pseudo-historical framework out of pre-historical tradition; but rather to show the values which the tree had for many Shona. However, there does appear to be a number of pointers which suggest that the Mbava tradition has something to be said for it, and that it is not necessarily unsound in the face of other traditions, rather later than Mbava's, which are in existence. Note for instance that the Tumbare family held a high position in the Changamire para-dynasty of the Rozvi kingdom;[11] that the Rozvi monarchy at Zimbabwe was Mbire introduced and that the tree is in Mbire country;[12] that the tradition has placed Togwa in a sound historical setting;[13] and that the other tradition quoted by Abrahams makes the first Rozvi king *later* than Mutota Nyatsimba.[14] The point being observed is simply that this tree, the *Muti usina zita,* had long remembered historical associations going right back to the beginnings of the Rozvi ascendency, possibly five hundred years before the coming of the Christian teacher.[15]

A second tradition associated with this very early period tells that it was at this tree that Chaminyuka, the senior supra-tribal spirit of the Rozvi, first introduced himself, by voice and miracle, without actually revealing himself by name. The first personal medium of the Chaminyuka spirit, some hold, came later and he was named Mutota (not to be confused with Mutota Nyatsimba).

Prior to that time, says Gelfand, "Chaminyuka had no medium and the spirit spoke from the air at Zimbabwe among the VaRozvi".[16] ... According to a very strong tradition picked up by Dr Gelfand while doing his ethnographical research on the Chaminyuka cult, before Munyepere,[17] the son of Tumbare, left the

Muti usina zita to establish himself at a spot just east of the present day Zimbabwe at a time when the Shona had not yet heard of the name of Chaminyuka,[18] a voice could be heard speaking from the tree. This they believed to be the voice of Mwari, the high deity who had accompanied the Mbire from their original home near Lake Tanganyika.[19] From the tree came this mysterious voice, saying, "You have come here. You had better all look down. You must not look up. Close your eyes." After a while, when they opened their eyes, there upon wooden plates was every kind of delectable food, milk, meat, and in hand-made and decorated clay pots was sweet beer. Water too, for washing with, for it was known that they would eat with their fingers. So they feasted like kings till they could eat no more. Then again the voice commanded, "Close your eyes", and whilst they did so the vessels and the remains of the repast were spirited away leaving only a sense of after dinner repletion within. Afterwards Chaminyuka, the first and the greatest spirit who emanated from God, made himself known and his utterances functioned as equivalent to those of Mwari himself. From that time the regional tribal spirits, the *magombwe,* chose as their mediums those people who frequented the spiritual tree where they found food and drink.[20] Again it must be stated that this is not recorded history, but stated tradition widely but certainly not universally held in Mashonaland.

To return to the Mwene Mutapa. Strains soon appeared in the administrative machinery of the kingdom. Almost immediately after the death of Matope one of his sons, Changa, born of a lowly wife, worked himself into the position of being the practical ruler of Mbire; for a short time he even usurped the seat of the kingdom. Over a period of time he and his descendants established their own dynasty, known as Changamire, over both Mbire and Guruuswa, in alliance with the declining Togwa dynasty which they were destined to replace. The Changamire's authority was not challenged until sometime between 1530 and 1550 when Neshangwa, the reigning Mwene Mutapa and the grandson of Mutota Nyatsimba, drove the Changamire for a while from his headquarters near present day Wedza mountain and into the southern portion of his kingdom. Through this bold campaign he earned himself the title of the praise name of Munembiri ("Owner of Mbire"). Munembiri established his main court in Mbire under

the *Muti usina zita* where his appointed judges met the paramount and petty chiefs of Mbire annually, both as a sign of the loyalty to the Mutapa and to deal with such matters as succession, famine, epidemic, and inter-clan disputes.[21]

The choice of this tree as the site of the Mutapa's court suggests that the tree must have had some prior significance which inspired its choice. Further, as a result of the annual ceremonies at the tree which were at once religious, political and judicial, a heightened prestige attached to it which remained long after the Mwene Mutapa kingdom had ceased to be of relevance in the Mbire province.

As a result of the combined efforts of both the Rozvi and Karanga the traditions associated with the tree were remembered when the Mwene Mutapa kingdom had become little more than a weak and insignificant principality isolated in the Zambesi valley. With the decline of the Mwene Mutapa came the rise to power of the Rozvi empire. This received its impetus both from the military prowess of the successive Changamire and from the religious authority derived from the Mwari cult. At its height in the early years of the 18th century, by spear and mysterious voice, the Rozvi dominated an area from the Indian Ocean to the Kalahari desert, from the Zambesi escarpment to the Limpopo valley. During the time of this acknowledged Rozvi overlordship the art of building in stone was developed to an elaborate degree and the arts of peace flourished. Drawing a possibly idyllic picture of Mashonaland fifty years prior to his visit to the country the famous hunter and explorer Selous writes, "The peaceful people inhabiting this part of Africa must have been at the zenith of their prosperity. Herds of small but beautiful cattle lowed in every valley and their rich and fertile country doubtless afforded them an abundance of vegetable food".[22]

These comparatively prosperous, industrious, and peaceful people had their overall political organisation quite broken, firstly by the Nguni invaders under Zwangendaba in the 1830 and secondly by the Ndebele invaders under Mzilikazi. This latter chief inaugurated an era of tribute collection over large parts of Mashonaland which lasted right up to 1893. During this period the Rozvi retained their religious prestige, which included the right to annoint and instal chiefs whose candidature had been approved by them and the candidate's own tribe; but as a result

of these dislocations a series of independent principalities established themselves in the place of the once united kingdom. Examples of these were the Budya under chief Mtoko, the Nhowe under chief Mangwende, the Mbire under chief Sosve, the Maungwe under Makoni and so on. These paramountcies formed the essential units of Shona political life when Moleli came to Nenguwo's kraal.

However much the old empire had been destroyed by the southern invaders and however much feuding developed as a result of it between the paramount chiefs and minor tribes in Mashonaland, there remained a strong tradition of the religious and political authority of the Rozvi.[23] It was to them the tribes appealed at the time of the death of a chief for the appointment of his successor and they either went to the reigning Mambo or arranged for his representatives to come to them for the confirmation of his successor. Chief Zvaitapasi Nenguwo himself was annointed in such a manner on the banks of the Ruzawi river.[24] Not only did the Rozvi generally maintain their ritual function, but there are some traditions that the *Muti usina zita* was a "tree under which the old Baroswe crowned their Mambos or kings".[25] This is repeated by other sources.[26]

By the time Moleli's Christian school had been established not far from its ancient shadow, the tree was mainly used by the Rozvi as a centre for rain making ceremonies.[27] In times of epidemic, drought or other disaster their religious representatives came from south Wedza, Chiduku, Buhera, Gova and possibly from as far away as paramount Makombe of the Barwe tribe in what is now Mozambique.[28] There they prayed direct to Mwari, without reference to the intermediary tribal spirits, in the traditional manner of the cult.[29] When they came the senior *svikiro* of the Nenguwo clan attended near at hand, while a little distance away the other men, women and children sat. In this way they participated in the ceremonies which were directed at obtaining the kind of help they needed in their trouble. There they heard the voice.[30]

So for five centuries the *Muti usina zita* played a minor but not insignificant part in the political, judicial and ritual life of the Shona. In its way it was symbolic of the ancient, deep rooted, essential, and unshakeable elements of Shona tradition which made life dear to them. It stood for their own treasured heritage, and carried the values they ascribed to it. Later on, as Modumedi

Moleli cultivated his garden in the shadow of the granite rocks of Nyachiswa beneath the ridge upon which the revered tree stood in stark clarity, its significance was missed both by him and his missionary colleagues. They had noticed, perhaps, the tendency of the Shona to welcome them wholeheartedly as if they had no spiritual beliefs of their own, or perhaps they noticed the downcast eye and the Shona tendency to disappear as rapidly and as totally as frightened deer into their surroundings;[31] but in truth it was with the values enshrined with this sacred tree that the Christian gospel was to be engaged at depth. The measure of the magnitude of the missionary task was indicated by its unmoved presence, and not by the evident insecurity of the sad and frightened clan under Nenguwo, a clan which first came to the true to seek sanctuary, and, still seeking stability in swirling waters, was in effect to turn to the white man and his representatives for safety, and especially to the teacher.

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1. The Nameless Tree. Many informed Shona, including chiefs Mudzimurema, Nyandoro, and Headman Chapendama, who was contending for the chieftainship of the Mbire tribe in whose area the tree is, have declared that they personally have tried without success to identify this tree which has leaves like that of a ground nut plant. It has been identified by several botanists, including Dr H. Wild in his **A Southern Rhodesian Botanical Dictionary of Native and English Plant Names** (Rhodesian Government Printing and Stationery Department) on p 122 as **Schrebera Argyrotriciha,** Gilg. (Fam; Oleaceae) (Argyrotricha is a synonym for mazoensis) It is described as common but widespread. The first white man to record notice of the tree was the great hunter Selous when surveying the Charter/Marandellas Road and on one of his maps he marked "The Great Tree". The specimen in Maringari, the area inhabited by the Nenguwo clan, was undoubtedly much larger than other specimens so far identified and the extraordinary size must have made it different from other trees in the mind of the Rozvi, of whom more will be said later. When Selous' road was in use the tree became the centre of a European camp site and travellers carved their names on it with the result that it was in effect ring barked. In the mid 1930's it fell. Even in its death the great tree had power, for it was said amongst the Africans that when it fell it would herald the departure of all the whites. At its fall there were several days of excited inward anticipation amongst the local Shona. The stump is located on Perseverance farm on the Watershed road between Marandellas and Wedza, just beyond Waddilove Training Institution.

2. The description of the tree has been given by Mrs Mangachena (interview 23.3.66.) E. Marwodzi, (interview 3.1.69) and Mrs Walton in her **Reminiscences** (Methodist Archives, London.)

3. The spelling Rozvi, which Abrahams prefers, is used in this work. The source material for this selective summary is found as follows: Abrahams, D.P., **The Monomotapa Dynasty,** in NADA, vol. 36, pp 58-84; same author, **The Early Political History of the Kingdom of Mwene Mutapa,** in the Proceedings of the 1960 Leverhume African History Conference (Historians in Tropical Africa) pp 61-92; same author, **Maramuca; an excercise in the combined use of Portuguese Records and Oral Tradition** in the Journal of African History, Vol 11, No. 2, 1961, pp 211-226; same author, **The Roles of "Chaminuka" and the Mhondoro Cults in Shona Political History, in The Zambesi Past** (eds. Stokes, E. and Brown, R) Manchester 1966, pp 28-46. References to other sources are given as they occur.

4. "House of Stone".

5. The senior royal mhondoro cult of the Rozvi empire. What is meant by a mhondoro cult will be explained later.

6. Apart from Shona oral traditional in which the name Togwa or Torwa frequently appears, he is also mentioned in Portuguese records. See Theal, G.M. **Records of South East Africa,** (Cape Town 1904.) vol. 4. p 267.

7. Abraham, D.P., **The Roles of "Chaminyuka" and the Mhondoro Cults in Shona Political History,** Opus cit. p 35. Caton Thompson **Zimbabwe Culture** (Oxford 1931.) p 177.

8. Ibid.

9. According to Portuguese records of the 18th and 19th century and oral tradition, the post of chief executive and military officer to the Changamire para dynasty was hereditary to the Tumbare family. The name Tumbare means mythical founder. Abraham, **Opus cit.** p 35. To-day in the Charter District the Tumbare is head of one of the two branches of the royal Rozvi family. See Morris. N3/33/8.

10. **Muhlanga S. Mbava and Others** NADA 1926 p 91. The tradition that the Rozvi chiefs moved from the Nameless Tree to Zimbabwe is mentioned in NADA (1926) p 107.

11. Abrahams, **Opus cit.** p 35 Footnote 5.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid. Footnote 4.

15. A person knowledgeable in Zimbabwe trees informs me that it is quite possible for a tree of the sort described here to have a life span of five hundred years or more. Note also the comment of Caton Thompson, **Opus cit.** p-180, Note 2. "All that we can say in regard to these (Shona) traditions, is that they contain a substratum of truth and their main thesis generally hand down to us a genuine fact".

16. Gelfand, M. **The Mhondoro Chaminyuka,** NADA 1959 p 6.

17. Munyepere, says Mbava, wished to pluck the moon from the sky and carry it on his forehead as his personal Ndoro, so he set his

soldiers building great wooden ladders which he tied together with the bark of the mfuti tree hoping that one day from the top most rung he could snatch his heart's desire from the night for himself. While the timber structure penetrated higher and higher into the atmosphere the time went on and the wood on the ground rotted until suddenly the whole enterprise collapsed and many men lost their lives. Poor Munyepere had to do without his coveted ndoro.

18. A historical note is apposite here. "Whether, in point of historical fact, the cult of Mwari and the Chaminyuka spirit were simultaneously introduced by the Mbire, or whether the Mwari-cult was pre-existent in the area and later structurally syncretised with a cult of Chaminyuka introduced by the Mbire, is obscure, but according to Rozvi tradition, the cult of Mwari was centred at Zimbabwe from the inception of the Rozvi monarchy, the successive mediums of Chaminyuka were stationed there . . ." Abrahams, **Opus cit.** p 34.

19. Ibid. p 33.

20. Gelfand, M. **Shona Ritual,** pp 13-14.

21. Abrahams, D.P. **The Early Political History of the Kingdom of Mwene Mutapa, Opus cit.** p 67. and footnote.

22. Selous F.C., **Travel and Adventure in South East Africa,** Roland Ward, London. 1893 p 81.

23. Examples of the prestige of the Rozvi during this period may be found throughout the Shona tradition. See note 25 below. They also spoke a distinct dialect of their own.

24. Mrs Mangachena, interview, 3.1.69.

25. Wild H. **Opus cit.** p 122. Dr Wild quotes from the notes left by Mr Frederick Eyles, a botanical collector active in the area in the 1920's. That the Rozvi did confirm in office the chiefs of subject tribes is well documented, but this seemed to occur mainly at the residence for the time being of the Mambo or at the home of the chief concerned. For a description of Rozvi installation ceremonies see Gelfand, **Opus cit.** pp 205-6. Jenkinson, J.N. **The Installation Ceremony of Chief Marange, NADA 1959, pp 46-48;** Bullock, C. **The Mashona,** (Juta and Co. Cape Town 1972) pp 283-289. Sub-chief Randazha is the proud possessor of a headdress which was bestowed upon Chief Mudzimurema's predecessors by the Rozvi.

26. e.g. Mrs Mafema, interview 3.1.69.

27. E. Marwodzi interview 3.1.69. Mr Marwodzi is chief Zvaitapasi Nenguwo's grandson, is well informed and has a long association with this area.

28. Chaitwa Zimbudzana, nephew of chief Sosve, interview 27.11.68. People came from "Makombe" he said, but he did not know where "Makombe" was. According to Abrahams, **Zambesian Past,** p 36, footnote 2, the ruler of the Barwe, Makombe, has the traditional duty to erect a cult hut for a newly installed Chaminyuka medium. E. Marwodzi, 3.1.69.

29. For notes on the Mwari cult see Blake-Thompson J., and Summers R., **Mlimo and Mwari,** NADA 1956, pp 53-58.

30. Pfani Shamuyedove, interview 3.1.69. Mr Shamuyedove was a young man living in Masvingo during Moleli's time.

31. Is the name Shona a name they gave themselves? One explanation, given by Native Commissioner Morris of Marandellas before the turn of the century, runs as follows, "... the Ndebele dubbed them 'Ama-T'shona,' i.e. 'those who disappear' or 'those who go underground' from their habit, when hard pressed, of taking to their (impregnable) caves." Morris, National Archives Manuscript, N3/33/6, p. 2.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFTER THE FIGHTING WE CAME FROM BUDYA

At the opening of the 19th century or before, prior to the first white man entering Mashonaland from the south, petty chief Nenguwo and his defeated followers escaped from their antagonised kinsfolk amongst the Korekore[1] to seek safety in Mbire. The founding ancestor of their tribe, the Budya, was the great Nehoreka,[2] son-in-law to Dzivaguru[3] and brother to Nehanda.[4] His home had originally been in the Zambesi Valley, at Mungari, about one hundred miles east north east of the Mtoko district, in which Nehoreka's descendants, the Budya, at present live. This chief, whose name means a hook with a barb on it, indicating that once he had hold of something he would never let go, had grown dissatisfied with the dry and inhospitable condition of his valley homelands. After a spying expedition, which he led to search for a more fertile domain, his proud clan followed him to the territory of Makate[5] in the southern highlands.

Makate, also an ancient hereditary ruler, had many well protected caves and hill defences in his realm. He was surrounded by rich arable and grazing lands, the streams with their lush green banks had fresh running water in them the year round and, like Canaan of old, the land flowed with milk and honey. All these Nehoreka coveted, especially the hill top forts from which he thought he might observe his enemies approaching from a distance. He therefore conceived a plan of campaign. Supported by an army provided by his father-in-law, Dzivaguru, he declared war on Makate. His attacks were all unsuccessful, for Makate in his defensive positions had all in his favour. Undeterred and true to his name, Nehoreka determined to try cunning instead of a frontal attack. A bid was made for peace, his friendship was offered and sealed by the giving of one of his daughters as wife to the victorious Makate. So suspicion was allayed and the two tribes lived for some time in apparent peace. Then came the surprise. An early morning swoop on a key fortress was successful and war continued ruthlessly until Nehoreka and his people were complete masters of a territory large enough for them to live in. Nehoreka,

who had kept his shrewd eye continuously upon his goal and prey, was now master of this coveted possession.

When the settlement of the land was complete the chief divided the land between his three sons, Nyazunzu, Nyadombo, Nyamara, and after they were settled he allocated areas for his councillors, so organising his whole principality in wards and sub-wards. Before he died he appointed Mtoko as his successor, so establishing the chieftaincy of the Budya tribe which was in existence when the white people occupied the country in 1890.

At the point of the passing of Nehoreka it is necessary to pause for a moment to understand a vital element of Shona religion. Upon the death of Nehoreka the Budya people believed that this founding father became their senior protecting spirit. His spirit medium, through whom he conversed with the tribe, became the acknowledged senior spirit medium of the tribe. This religious belief is embodied in the *mhondoro* cult[6] practised by the Shona tribes. The basic meaning of the Shona word *mhondoro* is lion, but the secondary meaning is 'the spirit of a deceased person of eminence held to reside in the body of a lion when not communicating from time to time with the living through an accredited human medium *(svikiro)* and socially recognised as a source of supernatural power, authority and sanctions.'[7] The Shona believe that the spiritual society is made up of both deceased ancestors and the visible society.

Therefore, upon his death, it was believed that Nehoreka entered into an enlarged world in which he enjoyed freedom to communicate with the spiritual creator and preserver of the land, Nyadenga, the Great One of the sky. He also fulfilled a specific role as senior guardian of the land and people, and protector of his descendants. In times of tribal disturbance, such as in periods of epidemic or drought, the tribe would approach their founding ancestor by means of clearly established procedures which need not be discussed at present. Through the established medium Nehoreka would speak to them of the causes of their suffering and the steps that should be taken by which it could be the medium brought to an end. It was believed that when in a trance the medium was possessed of Nehoreka's spirit, spoke with his voice and to all intents and purposes the converse the people held with him was communion with their senior ancestral spirit.[8] This spiritual commerce was the assurance of the people's security,

the reminder of their history and the promise of their continuity. One touching description of the meaning implicit in the ritual approach of a tribe to its senior spirit is given in the following words:

> "In ancient days all things were there. For there it was that heaven and earth were wont to meet. Every year we used to gather there, we the creatures of earth, and they, the elders, who led the way over the river in between which divides the creator from his creatures."[9]

This deep and tender relationship between the living and the dead penetrated into the whole of the Shona way of life and gave to it a coherence and a significance which, as will be seen later, early missionary observers misunderstood and undervalued.

Nehoreka is the original ancestor to whom the Budya tribe still looks back. The exact historical relationship of Nehoreka to the Mwene Mutapa kingdom is not clear, but those who originally called themselves Budya must have been an integral part of the kingdom because at its height the kingdom extended over and beyond Mungari, (Mungari lay adjacent to the Tavara principality), because they call themselves Korekore, and because of their obvious long political history. With the decline of both the Mwene Mutapa kingdom and the later Rozvi kingdom, the Budya emerged as virtually an independent nation.

By the 1890's they were amongst the most powerful of the Shona tribes, as is shown by a description by the hunter Selous who visited them in order to conclude a treaty on behalf of the Charter Company under whose aegis Mashonaland had been occupied. On his way up the hill to the primary fortress to see the aged chief Mtoko, he had to walk through a dense mass of tribesmen. At the interview "Mtoko was surrounded by over 1000 men, all fully armed, a large number of them with guns, and the rest with assegais, battle axes and bows and arrows."[10]

It was not surprising that the strong central control established by Nehoreka could not be maintained by succeeding and less competent chiefs. At some later time, which cannot be precisely identified, there arose a dispute about succession to a minor-chieftainship. One contender for the position, Mukwatanyama Nenguwo, was defeated and in consequence he and his loyal followers

fled, as so often happened in cases of similar dispute, to find a home in safety amongst far off strangers.

From that time onwards peace and settlement was not to be theirs, for under Nenguwo, wherever they went, they were destined to be involved in unrelieved feuding with their neighbours and in dissention amongst themselves. This period may have been for as long as one hundred and twenty years, for from the time of Mukwatanyama to Zvaitapasi Nenguwo who ruled in 1893 there was a succession of eight chiefs. If each chieftain ruled for an average of about fifteen years then the clan may have been rejected in their homeland as early as 1770 A.D. The present chief Nenguwo declares their move was before the Ngoni from the south under Zwangendaba swept through Mashonaland in the 1830's.

It was paramount chief Sosve of the Mbire tribe who took them into an alliance which was cemented by allowing Nenguwo to have one of his daughters in marriage. But this did not bring peace, the acceptance did not make them less rootless, it did not bring any deep indentification with the Mbire, nor bring them much of the comparative security enjoyed by the stronger Shona paramountcies.

From the time of this acceptance to that of their own acceptance of a Christian teacher there were eight chiefs: Mukwatanyama, Patsikamandu, Mukamana (a talented hand piano player, Mbira) who was rewarded, we are told, on two occasions with a wife by chief Mangwende for playing well at important functions and who also had a famous knife called *muchomucho),* Matevere, Muriva, Chakadini, Gwata and finally Zvaitapasi, to whom Moleli was eventually to come.[11]

During the time of their sojourn within Sosve's territory their first home was at the spot later to be called Rudaka, for there "daka" (mud) was to be used for the making of the bricks for the Ruzawi inn in the early 1890's. From there they moved to Nyazibitsa, then on to Mukwidzi, before settling around the *Muti usina zita.*

During this time feuding between paramount chief Seki and paramount chief Sosve was unremitting.[12] Nenguwo, on the border between the two, was constantly drawn into these quarrels. And not only was the clan perpetually on the defensive through these external threats, but there were also frequent and long con-

tinuing disputes mainly about succession. War between the royal houses often came to a trial of strength and on occasions the defeated factions had to flee to Seki, or Shawasha, or elsewhere for safety. Other paramount chiefs were brought in. Once, for instance, there was a battle between the faction supporting the reigning Nenguwo and paramount Makoni on one hand and Seki and the weaker Nenguwo faction on the other. In the battle paramount Seki himself was killed and his supporters thrown into disarray, while the disappointed Nenguwo faction fled for refuge in the Shawasha region.

The story of the incipient quarrel, and the forms it took, is long and complicated, and is now largerly forgotten, for much of it took place possibly more than one hundred and fifty years ago. Happily in the end the disputes were settled by death and the passage of time. When eventually the teacher was invited to remain with them the Shawasha dissidents had returned and there was, on the surface at least, some peace. Nevertheless, the existence amongst them of a proportion who had lived elsewhere, and who had latent grievances, and the long record of propensity to quarrel, should have been some warning that even with the teacher amongst them there was likely to be further eruptions of disagreement, that voices of dissent would still be raised in the tribal consultations, which, unsatisfied, would turn back to the violence and open hostility which had been habitual in the past.

At the time Nenguwo was settling himself and his clan at the *Muti usina zita,* some of Seki's people were living in the fortified Nyachiswa hill. When these people moved out after the famous battle, and after some normality had returned to their relationships, chief Seki apparently asked Nenguwo to buy the Masvingo fortress of which the Nyachiswa hill was the most westerly part. This Nenguwo did, making payment in guns, goats, and cattle — a transaction which suggests that he was at that time not unwealthy. After the purchase of the fortress Nenguwo first lived in the heart of Masvingo, but later moved his personal residence to Nyachiswa itself. It was this move that Mrs Mafema remembered as a child.[13]

Comment needs to be made on the Masvingo fortresses themselves. According to Whitty these Masvingo type fortresses are classified as Hill Fortress Enclosures built just before or during the 19th century. To build them, people collected stones not too

large for one man to carry which were found on the surface of the ground. Following a fairly primitive method the stones were built into uncoursed walls without the use of mortar. Thrown up roughly on tops of hills, they often incorporated granite boulders in their circular protecting walls.[14]

During the 1890's, what was the size of this clan? According to Ranger the tribe under chief Kunzwi-Nyandoro (whom Ranger calls a paramount) numbered about 2000 souls.[15] Nenguwo called himself a petty chief and would have a clan considerably smaller, numerically. Missionary figures show that in the early halcyon days of the school there under Moleli, after his tumultuous welcome, three hundred people attended the Sunday services. These two figures cover the lower and the upper numbers of the clan. Nenguwo's area extended several miles to the west and south of a wider area. As the clan occupied only the fortress area at that time it is possible that it consisted only of about five hundred persons, thus forming a group much too small to have real independence or a substantial confidence in their ability to survive. On the other hand they were numerous enough to have no need to hide their origins.

What was the state of mind within the clan a year or so after the beginning of the white administration in Mashonaland? The interpretations of the evidence available need not be entirely conjectural. It is known, for instance, that around about that time there was held a great *bira*[16] in the ceremonial hut of the chief Zvaitapasi, very near the *mutsamvi* (fig) tree at the foot of which was the tribal *dare* (meeting place). In the hut were gathered, in the usual custom, all the most important spirit mediums of both the family and the tribal spirits, supported by the dancers, drummers and hand piano players. There, say the informants "the spirits came out", by which they meant that the mediums were possessed and spoke the messages brought to the people by Mukurumeso, Nengenze, Nyahunzvi, Munyoro, Kotera, Gwata, and Chingorongondi and other ancestors. The message each one brought was the same, "Someone, a stranger, is coming to you. Receive and welcome him. When he has come we shall not return, but his presence will bring peace". Each in turn gave the same message accompained by the intense emotion evoked by the ecstatic drumming and dancing. At the end of the ceremony they accepted this as the unanimous advice of the spirits to the chief,

to the elders and their people, that their hearts should be open to take to themselves this mysterious stranger through whom their protection would be assured.[17]

The only possible explanation for this event seems to be the inward awareness that the threats against the clan, about which we have no detailed knowledge, were such that they were beginning to lose heart and to doubt their ability to continue to survive. Thus they were unconsciously casting about in their minds for some ally, someone greater than all their failed friends of the past. It was known at that time that missionaries were moving amongst some of the chiefs seeking invitations for teachers to reside in various strategic locations. The possibility of the support of one such missionary seemed to be their only hope and, through the established means, the people were being unconsciously prepared for such a decision.

This explanation of the readiness of Nenguwo to accept Moleli has been paralleled in other parts of Africa. In case after case those areas in which the white people found most ready welcome as allies were from among the interstices of the network of powerful states between which the weaker tribes were caught.[18]

This was precisely the case in Nenguwo's situation. From the west came the occasional threat from the Ndebele; but in their immediate environment they were trapped between the far more powerful paramountcies of the Harava and the Mbire whilst their own roots were to be found far away in the Budya country with whose people they retained their identification.[19]

Not only was it likely that they were faced with external threat, they had to deal with their own internal weakness, through the inability of the chief to secure the wholehearted allegiance of the whole clan under him, including those of different tribal origin resident in his area. A low internal cohesion suggests an undercurrent of continued disagreement, a divided leadership, a tendency to competition, and the assertion of independence. Historians working on the period suggest such tribes were less able to offer resistance to the new white conquerors and, therefore, out of self-defence, were ready to welcome them.[20]

In the meantime a lonely teacher, speaking an exotic tongue, was making his way eastwards, after a rebuff from paramount chief Seki who refused to allow him residence. He asks questions as he goes, of the location of chiefs and populace; until one evening he approaches a village he has not yet seen, now known as Nenguwo's, to find a hitherto unexperienced spirit of welcome. He is thus encouraged to enquire as to where their chief might be found.

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1. This nickname was given by the Zambesi Valley inhabitants to the Karanga who occupied what is now northern Mashonaland under the Mwene Mutapa kings because they came upon them "like a cloud of locusts".

2. The story of the Nehoreka seems to have been most fully told, in Shona, in the **Chishawasha Reader,** Book Six. (Chishawasha Mission Press 1953.) pp 50-65. In presenting the story no attempt was made to put it into any time scale. See also Gelfand, **Shona Ritual,** pp 5, 18, 41-43.

3. Dzivaguru, originally a local spirit in the Zambesi Valley, seems to have replaced the Chaminyuka spirit as the Mutapa dynasty's immediate spiritual link with Mwari, and so became the premier rain-making spirit of the area. See Abraham, **The Zambesian Past,** p 36 and Wollacott R.C., **Dziwaguru — God of Rain,** NADA 1963, pp 116-121.

4. By early 1896 Nehanda seems to have been the most powerful spirit medium operating in Mashonaland. See Ranger T.C. **The Role of the Ndebele and the Shona Authorities in the Rebellions of 1896 and 1897,** in **The Zambesian Past,** eds. Stokes, E. and Brown R. (Manchester 1966) p 126. Nehanda, Nehoreka, Dzivaguru are all examples of the Shona supra-tribal tutelary spirits called gombwe.

5. Robinson refers to his personal examination of the Tere ruins near Mtoko, traditionally regarded as the works of Makate, and dated by Wieschoff to not later than the 14th or 15th centuries. Robinson K.R. **The Archaeology of the Rozvi in The Zambesian Past,** p 16.

6. For a historian's summary of the difference between the **mhondoro and Mwari** cult, see Ranger T.C. **Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-97** (Heinemann, London, 1968) pp 17-18.

7. Abrahams, D.P. **The Roles of "Chaminyuka" and the Mhondoro Cults in Shona Political History** in **The Zambesian Past,** p. 28.

8. Informants are quite insistent that when the **mhondoro** was being consulted lions would come into the village. This was taken as a sign of the beneficial presence of the tribal spirit.

9. Chitepo H., **Soko Risina Musoro,** (Oxford 1958)

10. Selous F.C. **Travel and Adventure in South East Africa,** (Rowland Ward, London 1893) p 402.

11. These fragments of the history of the Nenguwo clan are mainly culled from an article edited by Miss Penelope Gordon M.A., in the 1959 edition of the Waddilove Magazine, and from records of an inter-

view given in 1953 to the Principal of Waddilove Training Institution by a son of the then chief Machiti and headman Mujakachi.

12. Posselt F.W.T., **Marondera** (NADA 1927) p 48.
13. Mrs Mafema, interview, 17.6.65.
14. Whitty A., **A Classification of Prehistoric Stone Buildings In Mashonaland, Southern Rhodesia,** in the South African Archaeological Bulletin. 1959 p 65.
15. This figure was given by the Native Commissioner Salisbury in December 1894 and quoted by Ranger, **Opus cit.,** p 85.
16. A ritual feast attended by family and tribal spirit mediums. For a description of these Shona ceremonies see Gelfand, **Shona Religion** pp 49-66.
17. In various interviews Mrs Mafema, Mrs Mangachena and Mr Marwodzi have given the information about the way in which Moleli was expected.
18. See Editors introduction, **The Zambesian Past.** p xxi.
19. It is interesting to note that today, after a separation from the main Budya tribe of possibly 200 years, the present medium of the Nehoreka spirit is resident in the area in which the Nenguwo tribe live.
20. The Editors Introduction to **The Zambesian Past** p xxv.

CHAPTER SIX

EFA REMEMBERS

"Hendei kumakumbgwe!"
"Hendei kumakumbgwe!"

The cry is taken up from among the rocks and the children run to collect their requirements for forest housekeeping; the girls skip quickly to their mothers to beg tsenza, mbambaira, chibage, rapoko,[1] or live coals for a fire, while the boys rush to pick up bows and arrows, and other weapons — then all of them join the laughing eager band making for their favourite shady forest hide-out where their play villages are. There the girls make their fires, grind rupoko, roast tsenza, and even make snuff from the leaves of the cultivated tobacco plant; the boys make huts for the family groups which have sprung up amongst them, or go off hunting rock-rabbits as part of the play.[2]

After housekeeping there might be swimming in a pool, at the foot of the hill Nyachiswa. Into this pool they run full speed and dive 'phuvu' (splash) on to their stomachs and up to their necks in the shallow muddy water, splashing and frolicking excitedly all the time. Putting their hands on the soft floor of the pool they kick their legs into the air; or playing 'chamunyurududu', holding their noses, they duck under the surface to swim as far as they can towards the opposite bank. Now tired they sit on the grassy bank and rub their brown skins till they shine, using groundnut oil or oil obtained from the crushed seeds of the mafuta tree.

There is much to interest them in village life. "There! VaRwere is going to make fire." Before long a little group sits round the man shaping the base of mutsubvu wood in which he has already made a small round hole half an inch in width and an inch deep. Taking a little of the dried and inflammable bark of the runje bush he teases it into fibres which he places beside the hole on the base, the hole in which a layer of carefully chosen sand has been already spread. Between hands he rubs a length of a branch of the wild plum tree previously stripped of bark and dried, and places one end in the prepared cavity. After several minutes of furious but unsuccessful rubbing, and as perspiration begins to form on his dark brow, Rwere begins to say,

"ssssss gonzo rikazvara wani ssssss"
"ssssss gonzo rikazvara wani ssssss."[3]

When the fire is burning the children run off, laughing as they go, to find another interest.

After the harvest the men and big boys load up the donkeys with food, tools and supplies of sacks. These sacks have been made from the bark of the mfuti tree which has been stamped, twisted, and pleated into a rough cloth. Presently the party moves away in single file along the forest path to the south, towards that part of Wedza mountain called Gandamasungo across the top of which is a deep red gash, the source of their iron ore. There they stay for three or four weeks digging out the ore and smelting as much as they need before returning with it to work in the forges at Masvingo where they make knives, as well as heads for spears, axes, hoes and hammers. The children are sometimes sent to these forges carrying food for a mid-day meal to the workers, especially to Matiza. From those forges ring out the sound of hammers on granite anvils, and to those sounds the children are attracted. Very often the forges are found at the top of the steep hills, made up of a circular protection of either stones or branches around the furnace, near which are the granite rocks upon which the red hot metal is beaten into a choosen shape. Using skin bellows one worker sits behind the charcoal fire fanning up the heat. When the iron is red hot it is drawn out of the coals by his companion, using wet bark as a pair of tongs, and is placed on the granite anvil where the preliminary shaping is done by the smithy using a large round rock as a hammer. The finishing touches are given at a later stage using an iron hammer of local manufacture.

Waterberries and mushrooms were delicacies beloved of children, and where can they better be found than along and around the well worn path leading to the great tree, the *Muti usina zita?* To the children it seems almost to reach the sky, high above all other trees, a land mark for miles around. It is awesome and mysterious, the place where the great father of the illustrious Rozvi reveals himself. Around it are the sacred huts and in its branches strings of precious ndoro and mbamba, the gifts of people wealthy beyond imagination.[4] So it is that this silent, secret tree draws them towards itself on their expeditions.

Having collected their fruit, wood or mushrooms, the children make their way homewards making sure as they pass the mazhanje or other tree with over-ripe fruit not to voice the insult 'Zvaknora', (It is rotten) for if they do so they will not have heard the last of it from the ancestral spirit who provided the fruit and who would take such a word as an affront.

Towards harvest time fear comes into their homes, for this is the time of the year when the dreaded Ndebele begin their raiding and tribute collection. Then men take time to build up the outer walls of Masvingo, their refuge, entrances are made ready so that they can be closed quickly in emergency, supplies are laid up deep in the caves, inaccessible to the enemy, around which the protecting walls have been built.[5]

The danger of an unexpected appearance of the Ndebele impi is always present, especially for small groups not in constant touch with their neighbours. Before going out to the fields and gardens in the valley below, women prepare their baskets of utensils and food and make sure they have supplies of beads, for if the cry suddenly rends the air, "Madzviti ari kuuya."("The Ndebele soldiers are coming") they can fly without loss of a moment to their nearest protection, taking the beads with them as money in case they are scattered and lost in the ensuing confusion. So round the fires at night at Nenguwo's village, towards harvest time, the inevitable questions are discussed.

"Has any message come of the Ndebele movements?"
"Will they come this year to us?"[6]

But life goes on.

In the villages at night there are many different activities. One night they may play 'breaking the ring' or possibly hold *dembe* dances in which the drums beat on the edge of the circle around which the elders sit. They watch small groups of boys and girls in the ring dancing, to the accompaniment of the drumming and ululations of the others who encircle the dancers, until they are tired. Then a fresh group leaps into the circle to exhaust themselves in the abandon of leaping and stamping, on and on they go late into the night.

If there is sickness in the village the *n'anga* (doctor) may diagnose possession by an unknown *shave*, the spirit of a dead foreigner operating outside of the family ancestral structure. Beer will be brewed and the people, including children, will be called to the main hut in which the sick person has been laid, for the *mashave* dance. In the hut, without a window, the door shut, and a smoky

fire burning in the centre, the women dance and sing to the accompanying vigorous beating of the drum, while the little children watch, until the spirit concerned is recognised and calls out its wish to join the company, and to be accepted. In the process it calls for a black or coloured cloth or beads to be given to the patient, and to be carried by him at all future *shave* dances, as a sign of possession by this particular spirit. So the patient loses his symptoms.

Grandmother is the final source of entertainment, if there are no dances of one kind or another. "Ambuya, itai rungano rwenyu" ("Grandmother, tell us one of your stories!") they call, crowding round her fire. To teach them obedience she tells them: —

> "Once there was a man who had two wives. He was fond of them. Sometimes he was called to the Chief's *dare* to help in judging cases. He did not wish his family to be hungry and so called his wives over to his granary in which he had a calabash, and gave them the food they required during his absence. He gave Vahosi, his first wife, more than the second wife because she had more children. He then locked the granary and told the calabash to keep watch if in his absence anyone came to collect grain.
>
> One day when he went away his second wife wanted him to think highly of her so she went during the night to steal from the granary. She did just as her husband did, and opened the tiny door, but when she tried to take the corn the calabash jumped out and started rolling down the hill after her husband.
>
> "She rushed to pick it up, but each time she leant down to pick it up it rolled a little further, singing as it rolled
>
> Akava Mukadzi Wakapiwa,
> Akasiya paudzidzirwe
> Akati, "Dende ndimirirewo"
> Gungunduru
> "Dende ndimirirewo"
> Gungunduru, Gungunduru.[7]

1. tsenza — a root; mbambaira — sweet potato; chibage— corn-on-the-cob; rupoko — small brown, grain.

2. This brief sketch of how children remember life at Nenguwo's has been put together from various reminiscences of Mrs Mangachena and Mrs Mafema. It should not be read as an anthropologist's account, for the intention is only to give some atmosphere to Moleli's working environment. Some mention of tensions within Shona society is given in chapter 10. A tendency to idealise the past is evidently widely found amongst different peoples.

3. The general meaning being, "If a rat is able to bring forth its young, I should be bable to bring forth fire."

4. The "ndoro" (see photograph on centre spread) belong to the Deep Sea Mollusca, class gastroped, family conidae. They are the end whorls of the shells of "conus mollusca" which is included in one of the five classes of mollusca, a large group of invertebrates, soft bodied animals having hard shells. The whole shell in which the mollusca lives is cone shaped. The round end piece is cut off and ground down to the well known nearly flat discs so highly prized as ornaments, currency, or symbols of authority. On a post card in October 1968 Mrs E. Goodall, Keeper of Antiquities at the Queen Victoria Museum, says "I believe these shells are only found near the East Coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean". Mrs Mafema, remembering the vashambadzi (the native agents of the Portuguese traders) who came into her own village, declares that the ndoro were traded for gold from them. It is possible they were first introduced in Mashonaland by the Arabs from the East Coast when they came to trade in the court of the Mwene Mutapa. (NADA No. 28 1951) von Sicard. **The Origin of Some of the Tribes in the Belingwe Reserve** (NADA No. 28, 1951) pp 5-25. And Jeffreys, M.D.W. **Cowrie, Ndoro** (NADA No. 30 1953) pp 35-52. Mbamba, on the other hand, were strung beads worn by men and women and made of wood.

5. See Hodder-Williams, **Opus cit.**, p 48 for a description of one such large, airy, watered cave which the white soliders found impregnable to everything except dynamite in the later stages of the '96-97 revolt. At this stage of the Shona-Ndebele confrontation the Shona had very nearly perfected their system of defence; they used codes of calls and drum beats to warn neighbouring villages of Ndebele movements, and sent messages further afield to give the alert. Thus they made it increasingly difficult for a surprise attack to be successful. On one interesting occasion Father Richartz was present at the home of Headman Chinutzi when the alarm was sounded; both cattle and humans were brought efficiently into the protection of a great cave at the side of the hill where the people knew themselves to be safe. There was no sign of haste or confusion. **Zambesi Mission Record,** (Vol. 3, No. 32) p 79. It turned out to be a false alarm so Richartz never knew what it was like to be inside during an attack.

6. Chief Mudzimurema remembers one such attack, in which his own father was killed, when they lived in the Charter district. But neither Mrs Mafema nor Mrs Mangachena have any personal mem-

ory of Ndebele attack, and this suggests that they were far from frequent. Nenguwo's position was somewhere between the areas in which the Ndebele regularly collected their tribute and that of the independent paramountcies who acknowledged no one's authority. See Ranger, **Opus cit.,** p 31. This position will account for the sense of insecurity within the Nenguwo clan, as has already been suggested.

7. "There was a wife who was given food. She was disobedient to her instructions. She said "Calabash, Wait for me" but it rolled away." A song with the refrain "Gungunduru".

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUGAR FOR THE LITTLE GIRL

By the 1st September 1892 Shimmin's seasoned wagon was ready to travel again, this time to the far north towards the ever beckoning Zambesi, to meet the new chief Lomagundi. Shimmin took with him four of the new teachers, leaving two in Salisbury, one of whom replaced Michael Bowen who was to return to South Africa on the completion of his contract.[1]

Moleli was the other teacher who remained at Epworth and before the rains set in he engaged in a reconnaissance on foot to the south-east of Salisbury, seeking an opening to commence school work.[2] His acceptance at Nenguwo was a sign to him of divine guidance; and after a short but happy stay there he hastened back to share his news with the missionary.

The missionary account of the establishment of Moleli at Nenguwo is given by Shimmin.[3]

> "We left Epworth on May 26th, accompained by the two teachers who, full of genuine missionary zeal, turned their faces towards the unknown land in the south. They knew not where their future home would be, but felt certain that in bringing the Gospel to the heathen they were following in the true apostolic succession. Nothing could be more strong and simple than the faith of these humble workers . . . and their hopeful persistence in well-doing has often put my own doubts to shame.
>
> We travelled along the Umtali road for about thirty miles and then struck off due south across the veld. A small stream with rather deep banks was the cause of our first breakdown, but as we always carried the necessary tools with us we were soon ready again for resuming our journey. Twenty miles further we out-spanned by the principal village of a chief named Nengubo, where the people gave us a very friendly welcome.
>
> One of the teachers (Moleli) had already paid the place a visit, and had explained our mission amongst the natives, so to some extent our way was prepared, and we soon had a large company clustering round the wagon and sitting by

the fire, eager to talk and willing to listen. The appearance of a white man at the kraal was of rare occurrence, and they evidently wished to make the most of the occasion . . ."

The next day Shimmin rode over to the settler who was to be Moleli's nearest neighbour, the Field Cornet employed by the company on one of Rhodes's farms. The name of the man, and the location of the farm is not known. Field Cornets[4] had been appointed by the Company early 1892, when it was in financial difficulties, in order to make up for the reduction of the police force. They were local white residents whose duty it was to deal with day by day differences between the white settlers and the Shona (such matters as theft and assault) and to press labour for local farms. Shimmin and this Field Cornet had a good chat, a luxury for them both in those isolated times; but before parting the Field Cornet, a clergyman's son, promised to give what help he could if a teacher were stationed at Nenguwo. Shimmin's description continues: —

"Soon after my return to the wagon I had a novel and most agreeable surprise. An old man came as a deputation from the chief, bringing a goat and some meal for the minister. This in itself was an extra-ordinary manifestation of generosity, as the Mashona are not in the habit of giving presents to white men, especially where they can barter the same for the much prized 'limbo' (cotton cloth) and beads. But he had come with a request from the chief and people that I should not go away before deciding to leave a teacher at their place. This had been my real object in visiting them, but I wished to do nothing without full consideration, and you can imagine my satisfaction when the people themselves took the initiative in the matter. I tried to find out from the messenger what benefits he expected to reap from the presence of a teacher. He could not tell very clearly, but knew that the Gospel must be good, and said that they wished to hear more of the white man's God. In the morning I had a large gathering of men, some of them coming several miles, and I found that they were unanimous in their request.

Not only would they send their children to school, but they would also come themselves to learn the right way. I promised to do my best for them, and should meanwhile

leave one of the teachers at the village. When I returned we would decide the matter."

Leaving Moleli with the people for a trial period Shimmin took the road to Charter. Once there he turned almost back on his tracks to the hitherto unvisited country south of Mount Wedza, through thick unpenetrated bush, across rocky streams sufficient to cause the collapse of the wagon, and over stony crags, to Gambisa's town. On completing his business there he found a guide and struck back directly to Nenguwo, cutting his way through virgin forest. He had to find fords across the numerous tributaries of the Sabi river, until he was at last thankful to come in sight of the old camp. He continues: —

"Everything had been going on well during our absence, the teacher had been kindly treated, and the word had been sent from a kraal some miles away that they were coming to settle by Nengubo in order to learn the truths of Christianity. In the evening we went round to the village, for a talk. But my astonishment was great when the teacher started them singing, and they went through several tunes fairly correctly, evidently enjoying the novel performance. We had only been away eighteen days, and this was the result. By means of songs the teacher had first won their confidence and awakened their interest, and they were now thirsting to know more. I expressed the pleasure I felt, and asked if they still wanted the teacher to remain. Their response was clamorous,[5] no other word is fitting — and when I told them that all was settled, and that he would soon be living amongst them they fairly shouted with delight. I explained to them that singing was only the first step, but our chief work was preaching the Gospel; they were now drinking milk fit for babes, but must go on to the strong meat. This they admitted, but wanted the process to be slow and gradual. The site of the teacher's house was selected, and they promised to have it ready by the time he returned."

So, after their adventurous and to them successful exploratory journey, the party returned to Salisbury. While Moleli collected such provisions and supplies as he needed for settling at Nenguwo, Shimmin arranged with the Surveyor-General to have the farm granted to the Wesleyan Methodist Church.[6] When he was ready Moleli set out to Nenguwo, either getting a lift on a wagon travel-

ling to 'old' Marandellas or by walking directly there, assisted by carriers bearing his basic food supplies and effects.

Shimmin was Moleli's superior and it might be wondered what kind of influence he had on Moleli, in what way his actions, attitudes, and values limited and even compromised the teacher from whom he hoped so much. It is not part of this work to make a full study of Shimmin's character, of his courage, adventurousness, extrovert nature, all qualities which would have made him an ideal settler, but only to see if it is possible to locate ways in which his attitudes may have been a factor in the tragedy in which Moleli was later to be involved.

Shimmin was very popular with the white pioneers and established a personal relationship with Cecil Rhodes. 'Last evening,' he wrote, 'I had dinner with Rhodes . . . one is inclined to indulge in unmitigated hero worship when in his company, he is a born ruler of men, a wise statesman who has done more for the prosperity of Africa than any government or governor has done during the past century'.[7] Shimmin admired Rhodes for his flair for development,[8] and in his own sphere his major pre-occupation was with religious development. 'Our great aim', he writes, 'is to have a line of central stations which we hope will eventually reach from the Limpopo in the south to the Zambesi in the north.'[9]

His development took the form of travelling far into the unknown, of meeting unevangelised 'heathen', of securing the appreciative acceptance of a teacher, and of surveying and securing land as a base for future operations. He considered this activity had priority over entering sympathetically into the personal life of individual Shona, and into their history, culture, beliefs, language, customs and religion.

Ranger describes how white confidence in Mashonaland grew up against a background of relative strength and expansion. The settlers, he says, presented the implications of colonial rule and settler economy to the Africans *with no concessions at all* (my italics). By altering only a few words this devastating description could be made equally accurate of Shimmin who presented the implications of Methodism with no concessions at all. What Shimmin wanted was the acceptance of the message, the gathering of souls into a church in the familiar pattern of English Methodism. He desired to locate the teachers 'where they could best begin their battle against heathenism'[10] and is delighted to write as we

have seen above when men promised to come to the school 'to learn the right way'.

We have already seen how ready Shimmin was to recognise the skills the Shona possessed, and to have a sympathetic, though paternalistic attitude towards them; but in religious matters he seemed to have been unable to believe they had any spiritual treasure. 'These people, with centuries of barbarism behind them, and with the bias of their moral nature to set against godliness, are at first incapable of comprehending even plain religious facts which appear so self-evident to every Christian child.'[11]

On his return to Salisbury Shimmin had the farm granted to the Mission.[12] He did not doubt the wisdom of this action, nor doubt the legality of the title, nor ask himself what the Africans thought about it, nor realise the possible implications for the teacher of this identification of the Mission and its workers with what later revealed itself to them as an alien authority. The Shona regarded the land as their own; they had never ceded it to the Chartered Company which they later found to be subtly and irresistably dispossessing them of their heritage. The occupation of such land by a teacher identified him with the dispossessing agency which some members of the Nenguwo clan were later to be convinced could only be removed by desperate measures.

Shimmin was, of course, not the only missionary to contact the Shona, but as senior missionary he set a pattern, to some extent, for his colleagues. His attitudes and his intention to gain his own albeit 'spiritual' ends did not make it easier for the Shona to distinguish between settlers and missionary and therefore did not make it easier for Moleli, when opposition against him appeared, to find acceptance in his own right as an African.

These comments do not imply that Shimmin should have been ahead of his age, or that in the light of the times he was anything other than a devoted man; but only to show that in three crucial respects, namely his preoccupation with development, his assumption that in his gospel pure light met darkness, and his belief in the importance of possessing title to land, he unconsciously influenced events and so carried some responsibility for Moleli's death.

Shimmin's description of his visit to Nenguwo is given very much from the point of view of the intrepid Victorian missionary. For something of another point of view we must turn to oral

testimony. John Jena, who as a little boy lived in the Gambisa area, describes the frightening impression made on him by the very first white people he ever saw in these words 'their eyes were shining bright and blood seemed to be dripping from their fingers.'[13]

According to Mrs Mafema and Mrs Mangachena, Shimmin and his party made a shelter beside their wagon about one hundred yards to the north of the big fig tree.[14] The children could not contain their curiosity and they crept out of the shadows at night to sit beside the fire and look wonderingly at these strange people whom they soon learned to like. One night Shimmin leaned over, took a tin from his food box and poured out into their outstretched hands what looked like white sand. This they eventually tasted, like timid young deer, and found it to be delicious.[15] In the morning, as Shimmin and the men walked about, little feet would patter behind them and childish voices call *'Sekuru, Sekuru,'* ('Uncle, Uncle') to scamper off only when the strangers had turned and shaken hands with them all.

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1. Shimmin's report quoted verbatim in McDonald, **Opus cit.** p 40.
2. Waddilove Magazine 1959. Shimmin, report of **Journey to Gambisa's** 7.7.93.
3. Isaac Shimmin, report of **Journey to Gambisa** 7.7.93.
4. Ranger **Opus cit.** p 61
5. Part of the explanation of this enthusiastic welcome may lie in the fact that the "honeymoon" period, the period directly following the first appearance of the white settlers, was not yet over in this area. See Ranger, **Opus cit. ch. 2.**
6. Shimmin, report of **Journey to Gambisa** 7.7.93.
7. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley, 20.10.93.
8. cf. Lord Grey's remark that Rhodes was a great developer but not a good administrator, quoted by Ranger, **Opus cit** p. 53.
9. Shimmin, report **Journey to Gambisa** 7.7.93. His policy was, of course, inspired by that of William Shaw, who established Methodist work in the eastern province of South Africa in the 1820's, who was determined to use his utmost efforts to establish a chain of Wesleyan stations "beginning near the border (Cape) colony and extending along the coast country to... Delagoa Bay" Findlay, **Opus cit.** p 252. By Shimmin's day the Zambesi held a powerful fascination for the Methodists. Once reached it meant the way was opening for missionary link between South and East Africa. Rhodes' political vision of British rule from Cape to Cairo was paralleled in the religious sphere, and Shimmin comments, 'We see a ray of light from Cape Town to Alexandria'
10. Shimmin, report of **A Journey to Lomangundi's** 19.12.92.
11. McDonald **Opus cit.,** p 38. A quotation from Shimmin.
12. The land was granted, but not surveyed. Title was eventually given to the Methodist Mission in 1898.
13. John Jena, interview. 16.7.67.
14. This tree has since fallen down, but another has sprung up beside it and can be seen about a hundred yards to the east of the Waddilove School Clinic.
15. Mrs Mafema, interview. 17.6.65.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HE BUILT HIMSELF A HOME

On his return from Salisbury Moleli found a simple Shona hut prepared or being prepared for him. He was now the resident teacher at Nenguwo's village, about to be launched upon the life for which he had volunteered twelve months previously.

Though elderly Moleli was an active and vigorous person, and as such we might expect him to approach his task positively and with some creativity. First he had to secure his fresh food supply, for while it was a firm custom of the Shona to provide hospitality to visitors, it was not to provide for those living among them, except possibly under special conditions. Moreover he had his own favourite vegetables which were not grown in Mashonaland. He therefore approached the chief and was granted a site for a garden at the foot of Nyachiswa Hill where others, including the Rwere family, had their gardens. Here, using tools brought in from the south, possibly manufactured, he dug his beds, planted and watered his seeds. Moleli never lacked help in his garden from the children, not only because children were naturally attracted to him, but because he was always generous with what he produced. Many a time later on did a delighted cluster of youngsters bob along behind him on their way to share a meal of the first ripe pumpkins of the season. His pumpkins were shared with people, such as the Mudimu family, as far away as Epworth Village.[1]

When his work was more established and children accompanied him on preaching expeditions, they sometimes returned hot and tired at a time when food was not available at their own homes. On such occasions Moleli would take them to his home to give them food there.[2]

Moleli was a married man with a family which he had left in the Northern Transvaal and from whom he naturally did not wish to be separated for long. As far back as the previous November Shimmin had written to London, 'the native teachers are very anxious to have their wives up here next year'.[3] In March 1893 Shimmin travelled to the Transvaal where he made a point of seeing Mrs Moleli who was so pleased with the news from Mashonaland that she expressed her readiness to join her husband immediately. By this time Moleli had already offered to extend his period of service to five years; Shimmin thought he might settle permanently in Mashonaland and that Mrs Moleli would make a valuable addition to the mission work.[4]

By July 20th 1893, within two months of Moleli's arrival at Nenguwo his wife, together with two other wives from the Zoutspansberg, had arrived in Salisbury.[5] Moleli travelled to Salisbury where a high-spirited, animated and typical African reunion took place. With Mrs Moleli was her daughter Efa, then a girl of about thirteen or fourteen, Paulina, about eight, and Zecharia, who was killed in 1896. Later another child, Emily, was at Nenguwo, but while it is likely she was born after Mrs Moleli arrived in Mashonaland, it is not absolutely certain. Their eldest daughter, Talitha, a girl of nineteen, had been left at Good Hope Mission.[6]

Mrs Moleli's journey must have been taken with profound uncertainty for the war between the Ndebele and the settlers was about to begin. Not only had the three teachers come in to meet their wives, but all of them had been called in by Shimmin to confer with him, and to make preparations for whatever difficulties the inevitable war would bring.[7] The wagon carrying the wives must have scarcely escaped the raiding Ndebele regiments which on July 9th of that year began tribute collection in the Victoria District, through which the wagon was passing at the time. This raiding led to the incident in which Shona men were chased and killed in Victoria town itself, and to the opening of the Matabele War.[8] No wonder the men were glad to see their wives!

It was to a home of rather poorly constructed hut in the Shona style that Mrs Moleli and their children came. Like her husband she was ignorant of the language, customs and beliefs of the people amongst whom she had chosen to be, and, like him, marked off from them by her dress. But these and other disadvantages did not discourage her; she and her children quickly accepted the circumstances.

The Moleli's first intimate friendship was with the Rwere family, especially the mother who was later baptised as Ruti (Ruth) of whom it is said she was Moleli's first convert, and the first person to put away heathen practices.[9] One of the chief's wives, later baptised as Annie, also attached herself to the beginnings of the Christian community.[10]

In those early days proper dress was almost as important as pure doctrine among the Methodists. Mrs Moleli took it upon herself to teach the women how to dress in the custom of the women of the Good Hope Mission; with long skirts, blouse and head scarf, to make themselves look for all the world like white ant queens, thought the Shona sceptics.[11] In so dressing, the women had to lay aside their skins, ndoro, mbamba and other traditional ornaments.[12] Chinandi was given a dress by Isaac Shimmin, from whom other clothes for the women might have come.[13]

This symbolic and public disavowal of the tradition of the Shona people coupled with the avowal of a foreign tradition did not go unnoticed in the village. At a time when the Shona were beginning to notice some of the grosser overt act of the whites[14], this change from traditional dress became possibly the first cause of division with the Nenguwo clan, for some, particularly Headman Chizengeni, felt it an offence that the beads should be removed. 'Why do you take these things off?' they demanded, and set off a debate which finally culminated in a meeting of all Nenguwo's people to decide what to do.[15]

It was also made evident to the tribal authorities that something was wrong when at a tribal *bira* the spirits 'refused to come out' with the result that none of the mediums except Nyahunzvi were possessed. The only interpretation of this was that the tutelary spirits had been displeased and that their protective presence was being withheld. The reason given by Nyahunzvi was that the presence of the foreign teacher was the cause of the breach.

In the meantime passing visitors were attracted to the Moleli household. Bernard Mizeki, the Anglican catechist living near the village of paramount Chief Mangwende, about twenty five miles to the north east, sometimes travelled to Anglican mission stations in the Wedza district accompained by John Kapuya.[16] On their way they used to stop over for the night at Moleli's home. While Mrs Moleli cooked the evening meal, Moleli and Mizeki conversed in Zulu, said to be the one language they both understood. Moleli, an older man, was making only slow progress in the Shona language.[17]

Men were also attracted to the Moleli household. Muriva, the chief's son who was later to become chief in succession, was a talented player of the traditional hand piano *(mbira)* and on the occasion of one visit by George Eva entertained the missionary

by playing the hymn 'O happy day that fixed my choice' on it.[18] In fact, as hinted by Eva and confirmed by Mrs Mafema, quite a community grew up around the church. In addition to Nyamadzeu Rwere and Muriva Nenguwo there was Zacheus Musonza, a son of chief Chiremba and two men, Shamuyedove and Gombera, who built their huts near Moleli as a sign of their interest and participation in Moleli's work.[19]

Such was the uncertainty of life for Shona tribes people that they could not hope to survive without a knowledge of the edible fruits and roots of the forest. This knowledge the mothers and children readily shared with Mrs Moleli and her children, taking them among the rocks, along forest paths and beside the banks of the streams, pointing out and collecting hacha, tsambatsi, mazhanje, matamba, matohwe, and makuyu when these fruits were in season; or digging out such roots as magwera, tsombore, magwere dembo, or tsenza dzomusango.[20] During the drought of 1895-6 this knowledge was to prove invaluable.

With his family about him Moleli had the incentive to build a proper house. As help in this kind of work is not customarily provided by the Shona for people living among them, except on a basis of a beer-cum-work party, Moleli probably had to build the house himself with only partial assistance from members of his embryonic Christian community. His house, or rather houses, for there were three round huts when he finished,[21] were described by John White as a model; large, airy and comfortable.[22] Not only was the window and door space, the height and finish a model, so was Moleli's application to the task.

A further novelty introduced by Moleli were his oxen, which he used for ploughing as well as drawing a cart.[23] While travelling in areas as yet unvisited by Europeans Shimmin noticed how much yoked oxen under the direction of a driver evoked surprise among the Shona.[24] At that time the Shona did not plough the ground but hoed it, using implements fashioned by local blacksmiths using low grade metals. For this reason their cultivation was limited to areas with light loam and sandy soils.

Moleli's mode of life, his scale of values, family relationships and pattern of social relationships were in marked contrast to that of the indigenous people. The one deep link he had with them — they may have had doubts about his Africanness — was the quality of his personal relationships. 'What Moleli could do

well' said Mrs Mafema, 'was make people happy; he could stay with people and share things.'[25] This gift is what Christians call love.

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1. Mrs Maria Luwanika, interview September 1966.
2. Mrs Mafema, interview 18.3.67.
3. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley, 18.11.92.
4. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley. 8.3.93.
5. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 20.7.93.
6. Family tree provided by J. Tabane, Talitha's son. Interviewed by Rev N. Hudson December 1968.
7. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 20.7.93.
8. Mason, **Opus cit.** pp 163-183.
9. A quotation found in C.F. Andrews, **John White of Mashonaland** (Hodder and Stoughton, 1935) p 85. No reference is given for the quotation.
10. Shimmin, report **Our First Martyr** received in London 5.10.96.
11. Phani Shamuyedove, interview. 3.1.69.
12. Shimmin. **Ibid.**
13. Mrs Mafema, interview, 17.6.65.
14. Farrant, **Opus cit.** p 153.
15. Nenguwo's councillors; **Address to Waddilove Staff** 1953.
16. E. Marwodzi, interview 3.1.69.
17. Farrant **Opus cit.** p 138.
18. Eva to Marshall Hartley, 27.9.93.
19. Mrs Efa Mafema, interviews. 17.6.65; 24.5.66.
20. Mrs E. Mafema, interview. May 1967.
21. Mrs S. Mangachena, interview. 23.6.66.
22. **Work and Workers of the Foreign Field.** Annual Magazine of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, 1895.
23. Shimmin, report: **Our First Martyr** received in London 5.10.96.
24. Shimmin, report on **Journey to Gambisa** 7.7.93.
25. Mrs Mafema, interview 9.6.67.

CHAPTER NINE

GIVE ME YOUR CHILDREN TO TEACH

Once Shimmin had settled Moleli at Nenguwo's village he never returned there himself. After that period the two men only met when Moleli had occasion to go to Salisbury; such as the time when he went in to meet his wife on her arrival by wagon from the south, or when he was called in by Shimmin to discuss the Matabele crisis, or when he went in on his own to Salisbury, taking pumpkins to Mrs Luwanika's mother on the occasion of the death of her husband.

George Eva, Shimmin's second in command, was given pastoral charge of the station and paid supervisory visits to it from time to time, usually quarterly. On his first visit he found Moleli had made good progress during the four months in which he had been at the school, considering that the concept of reading and writing was entirely outside the experience of his scholars. He was gratified to notice that "that Mashona are able to report the alphabet and sing many of our own hymns and Sankey's to Mashona words". The visit was something of a personal triumph for he was able to expound his message in Zulu, to the great interest of his listeners. The wagon driver, who was later killed in the uprising, interpreted his message. It was on this occasion that the "gentleman of royal blood" whom we presume to have been Nenguwo's son Muriva, played the hymn "O happy day" on the native hand piano.[1]

Moleli's objectives were at one with those of the missionaries. His first objective was the conversion of the people. This conversion normally took place at an evangelical service of worship, held every Sunday, and had as its outward sign the "penitential cry". In many ways this cry of the penitents was the purest earthly pleasure of those early Methodists and it must have first broken the air in this part of Mashonaland when Mrs Moleli and possibly Efa, the eldest daughter, responded to Moleli's emotional call to confess their sins and receive God's forgiving mercy. For those Shona who accepted that they were in a state of personal need, and who showed it in cries and tears, it meant a profound shift in their authority orientation. Up to that time they had been

content with the traditional Shona life as they knew it in the village context, with its customs, values, and beliefs. There they were committed only to pleasing their ancestral spiritual guardians *(vadzimu)* by living exactly as their ancestors had lived before them.[2] Now this traditional loyalty was being loosened and redirected towards the acceptance of a new and foreign authority in moments during which to some extent their rational faculties were in abeyance.

Moleli worked to develop "an awareness of sin" among his congregation and amongst those with whom he came into frequent or occasional contact. He believed that if individuals were personally touched with a sense of wrong committed, his call for submission to the biblical message as he understood it would be stronger and more effective. It is for this reason that he brought to attention those aspects of Shona tradition most at variance with the Christian tradition namely polygamy, witchcraft, the right of a father to expect a girl to accept a marriage in spite of her feelings, the *mashave* ceremonies, and other ancestral rites. He may have also decried excessive harvest drinking and its consequent fighting between adults, the killing of twins, and other features of Shona life of the time; but these have not been specifically mentioned by informants. In commenting on these aspects of traditional life he was striking at a way of life which his listeners considered to some extent essential to the continuance of life itself. Of course, his central message was the love of God shown in Jesus.

While Moleli's immediate objective was to lead his congregation into a commitment to this new tradition of which he was the representative, he had long term objectives also. In his school work which proceeded day by day, week by week, he was laying the foundation for the new future nucleus of converted Christians to hold fast to and grow individually in the Christian faith. His aim was to equip new Christians to read the scriptures for themselves, and this was the basic justifications for school work. Even writing had a lesser place than reading and was taught as a support skill for reading, to fix the recognition of letters which made up the words to be read. This emphasis explains why teachers were accepted who could read but could not write. At this time religious and educational work as we know it today was inextricably intertwined in one operation. Both young and old shared in

it. In Moleli's mind it was the older ones to whom he looked for immediate response in depth, but in the children he saw the hope for the future.

In order to achieve his objectives Moleli employed various methods and made full use of the personal gifts and graces with which he had been endowed. As has already been observed he was not well educated by the standards of the English settlers of the time, but tolerably well educated by the standards of many of the Transvaal Boers. He did, however, have an attraction for children, a gift for friendship in respect of adults, and that special African trait of patient tolerance of people with difficulties in personal relationships. Then there was his gift of song.[3] Of all his gifts, especially the latter, he made full use. Shimmin had been pleasantly surprised to find after his return to Nenguwo from Gambisa, after a period of eighteen days, that the congregation could go through several hymn tunes fairly correctly and with evident enjoyment, even though this style of singing must have been curiously odd to the tribes people and also previously outside their range of experience. As he sat at his own fire near the wagon listening to Moleli teaching songs using the familiar sol-fa scale, and to the occasional shouts of laughter, he was encouraged there and then to write a little homily on missionary method in "pioneer" missionary work; but his thoughts were little more than putting on paper what he had observed Moleli doing in practice. In June 1894, approaching the school on his first visit, George Eva was met by the children led by Moleli singing a song which had been specially composed for the occasion. Unfortunately we don't know what the song was; but it gave pleasure to the missionary, teacher and children alike. In the evening as Eva sat beside his camp fire the children came again and sang. After Eva's visit was over Moleli began to instruct his children in chants suitable for the words of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle Creed.[4]

Moleli used the children's enthusiasm and growing singing skill in evangelistic work outside the immediate environs of the chief's village. The nearest other village to Nenguwo's was Chief Marondera's,[5] and in December 1893 Moleli was holding his services there. Carrying his horn, he and his children walked to their destination, using their exotic style of singing as an attraction to the villagers, as if to say to them, "These have received the word of

God. Do you not wish to be like them"? By the end of 1894 Moleli was visiting two other places, one called Chisipite paChiseve, a village at the source of one of the tributory streams running into the Ruzawi River. This may have been Sadza's village, Sadza being related to Nenguwo. The other site of his evangelistic activity was the home of headman Mhowa, who lived about four miles to the east of Nyachiswa. All these villagers were drawn into the general fortress area of Masvingo when for one reason or another their security was threatened. The land immediately to the west of Masvingo was open and offered none of the traditional protection required by humans. It was, according to Mrs Mafema, "the home of lions".

Moleli knew only one formal method of teaching and that was the method by which he had himself been taught. His own teachers had been less educated than he was.[6] Basic instruction in reading and writing consisted of writing letters on the sand and naming them. This work was done in groups, after preliminary instruction by the teacher, and the most able person in the group took charge of it. Hence they made progress in "reporting the alphabet". When these letters were mastered the scholars began to build up words.

Two difficulties presented themselves at this point, one being that all the printed materials possessed by Moleli were in Xhosa and the other that he knew of no work which had been done in standardising Shona orthography.[7] Each teacher was literally on his own and each Shona word spelt out was an individual achievement. The solution to the problem was to bypass the vernacular, with the result that these preliterate people were taught to read a foreign language.[8] These difficulties were not, however, insuperable. At a similar school among the Njanja tribe John Jena learned to read and write Xhosa under the tutelage of Orga Belesi, one of Moleli's contemporaries.[9] The present chief Zvimba also has similar memory of success in reading, and of the great hearted Zulu teacher, James Anta, who used a Xhosa Bible from which he tried to make Shona translations.[10]

Once the letters could be named, as already stated, they were used to build up words, not syllable by syllable but letter by letter. *"Bee — Ah — Bee — Ah"* chorussed the children who then put the sounds together, saying *Baba* (father). So their first steps were taken in reading, before they moved on to harder words.[11] Where

Moleli had to spell Shona words, possibly when teaching the words of a hymn, he had very limited resources and was expected to break into a field of research which would have defied a much more educated man. In selecting words for teaching he must have at least received some help from his Xhosa spelling book which was used mainly for teaching words to be found in the Xhosa Bible, which was the only book the scholars could purchase. If he had to teach Shona words he would have found in his spelling book some attempt to grade words in difficulty and suitability for learning in preparation for scripture reading, and thus been given some clue as to some of the Shona words he might try to bring into his teaching. This "chipelling" book is mentioned by several informants.[12] It must, however, be emphasised that the scholars were basically taught Xhosa letters, Xhosa words, for reading the Xhosa Bible.[13]

Moleli was not a trained teacher and used only those methods he remembered being used by his own teachers, who, as we have seen, were even less qualified to teach than Moleli himself.[14] Teachers of method called his method the "direct method", which was for the most part a case of "Watch me, then do what I do". Those who grasped what he was teaching most quickly were used in the groups to teach the others. By this method his curriculum of writing, reading, spelling, recitation and singing was taught. This was the extent of his formal curriculum.

He had one other method with the adults. As he travelled round the homes visiting the people he would make contact with them and particularly the men either at the *dare* or round the fires in their huts.

> "What name do you give to the great one above"? he would enquire.
>
> "Mwari" (or one of the other names for God) was the usual reply.
>
> "That is the one I wish to tell you about" he would say, and proceed to open a conversation on the topic.[15] This subject was closest to his heart.

In attempting to reconstruct Moleli's message and the basic themes of his preaching, we find details revealed which seem characteristic of a kindly and godly man who had the courage to be concerned for his charges. The themes have been put to-

gether into a rough verse by the informants and runs thus, forming a simplified Apostles' Creed:

Vana, vangu, uyai	My children, come
Uyai, mutende Mwari	Come, believe in God
Mwari wedu, ari kudenga	Our God is in heaven
Anokudai, anoda kuponesa	He loves you, wishes to save you
Mubve muzvakaipa	Leave your sins.

The themes of the fatherhood of God, his love and his invitation to his children to trust in him, to live lives which are pleasing to him, and his offer to help those who do so, are a form of christian message which fits naturally into the Shona way of thinking. The father, the creator, who wishes his children to live like him is a concept of God not utterly different from their own and in this message the high and distant Mwari of Shona thought became close, personal, and interested in them. There was a beautiful simplicity in his gospel message.

He also taught them the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments and various unidentified Bible stories. These passages, together with the new ideas conveyed through the songs he taught them and such personal experiences as he shared with them from time to time, brought to both adults and children new intellectual experiences. Elements of his Christian teaching had similarities with some Shona beliefs; but through his teaching concepts were being enlarged, altered or even new ones developed. While Moleli was not able to formulate his teaching as may be set out in a text on Christian theology he was nevertheless introducing them to the Christian concepts of God, the incarnation, the resurrection, the life to come, the church and the forgiveness of sins.

As he outlined his Bible stories the scholars began to learn more of new things, to become aware, however dimly, of time and space, of other lands and races, kingdoms and customs, values and material culture; and in doing so began to enjoy an enlarged area of thought and develop a new appreciation and awareness of the world beyond the borders of their own. This interest some were never to lose, for interest, inquiry, curiosity and ambition had begun to be aroused.

He brought them also other concepts of behaviour, fellowship, dedication and personal relationships, such as they saw in his own relationship with his wife and family. He did not, say the informants, drive the children away who came to his home, as other men did, and they worked with him in his garden in a new kind of relationship.

Moleli must have made progress in the Shona language. According to John Kapuya he could not speak Shona well. Thus when Bernard Mizeki stayed over at his home, on journeys to Wedza district, they conversed in Zulu whilst Mrs Moleli prepared the evening meal. That they spoke in Zulu may simply mean that they used the language medium which provided the most natural means of communication, the one which brought back to them memories of South Africa and reminded them that they were sharing an adventure in Mashonaland.[16] It is true that Moleli was an older man and made slower progress in the vernacular. While Shimmin unashamedly spoke "lo lo" Moleli was feeling his way and making grammatical mistakes that are still remembered, such as saying. "Uyai masangu" instead of "Uyai hama dzangu" (Come, my friends.)[17] If Moleli, a fluent Sotho speaker, was at ease conversing in Zulu there is no reason to suppose that Shona, also a Bantu language, presented a continuing problem to him; nor any reason to doubt his having achieved a high degree of fluency over the four years of intimate association with the local people who only spoke Shona.

To return to his translation work for a moment, which was necessary if he was to put Shona words to the songs he was teaching, we see that he must have got some help from his fellow teachers, particularly when he visited Salisbury at which time he would have compared notes with the Epworth teachers. Michael Bowen, in the opening years, first broke into the language and left behind some foundation upon which the others could build.

As Moleli's second daughter developed, she became more and more Moleli's assistant, or, as the Synod Minutes describe her, an "unpaid agent". We have no information of Efa's education, but it was likely that she obtained it at Hope Mission and she may have made more progress in formal education than her father, particularly if she started younger than he did. Moleli must have been middle aged when he met the first teacher. Efa was very companionable and the Shona girls took to her. She

often visited them, spending time in their homes or going on expeditions collecting mushrooms, firewood, waterberries or wild fruit. From 1894 onwards, when she was fourteen or fifteen she helped with the instruction, the group work and the Sunday School.[18]

When Moleli first opened his school in 1893 he had a regular attendance of about one hundred and fifty boys and girls in equal numbers. By the end of 1894 the numbers reported had decreased to about sixty girls and forty boys.[19] This reduction of interest was almost inevitable after the first flush of excitement over the teacher's arrival, but to some extent may also have been a reflection of the growing distrust which was beginning to spread through the country of the settlers and their representatives. The trend had already been noticed in 1894 by one writer, "It is not pleasant to notice the way in which the Mashona avoid coming into contact with the settlers, and to recollect that when we first went up to Mashonaland they welcomed us gladly."[20]

One also wonders whether there was a growing doubt that the teacher would be able to provide the full protection that they had hoped for in inviting him to open a school in their midst. Or it might have been that now they had secured their objective of getting resident protection of a representative of the powerful settlers there was less felt need actually to come to his school. Hence the decrease of the enthusiasm of the elders was reflected in the diminishing interest of the children.

Nor should we forget that the idea of attending school every day was quite a foreign idea to the Shona. To them some visits were equivalent to regular attendance, and Moleli may have suffered as much from a decreased regular attendance as from having a comparatively different group each session. There was no such thing as a daily register. On his quarterly visit the missionary would make a general calculation of the number present in round tens or hundreds. The only cross check was in the form of a question to the teacher about whether the number present at the time was the usual number.

Whatever the actual position, it was felt that the chief was to blame, and on George Eva's last visit to this station before handing it over to his successor John White, he wrote, "We had a not very pleasant duty to perform here, viz. of speaking very

roughly to the chief because he refused to let the children come of a morning to school; however I think the lecture I gave him has had the desired effect and he will not trouble us in the matter again. I also told him he must build a church, to which he consented and I told the teacher that he must see these instructions are carried out."[21]

Exactly what was meant by saying that the chief refused to let the children come to school we don't know. It may have arisen from the mistaken idea that the children's negligence was caused by and could be remedied by a word from the chief. Shona chiefs did not have that kind of authority, though they had strong moral authority.

Evidently opposition to the school was being felt in the homes of those who had originally welcomed Moleli so enthusiastically. Instead of trying to plumb the causes Eva took the popular line amongst the settlers of the time that a good lecture should achieve its objectives, a gentler but none the less similar approach to those who thought people should be converted by the sword. The chief promised that the children would come to school; but as the missionary was unable to understand what was involved from the chief's point of view it could not have been counted as a promise supported by intention. Rather it was a promise given to get out of the embarrassment of the confrontation. By the end of the following year it was reported that "during the year a small church and a teacher's house has been built" and so the chief had evidently felt impelled to keep at least the easiest part of his promise.[22] This acquiescence was still no more than an expression of his dilemma. We have seen that his objective in accepting the missionary was to secure for his people the advantage of the protection inherent in the teacher's presence. He had no particular wish to accept the teachings that would be given by him, unless some advantage could be seen in them, for the chief's prime responsibility was to keep his people together in security and peace. Now he was having to walk the tightrope between the demands of the missionary and the wish of the clan, of which he was part, to be left alone to pursue its traditional way of life.

When completed the church was about thirty feet by ten feet, the span being limited by the trusses which could be made from the indigenous trees. All the same it was about the largest building in the neighbourhood. The earthen benches were prepared

by Mrs Moleli and the women using the local clay, Mrs Moleli showing them the novel way of arranging the benches one behind the other.[23]

Malaria was an ever present hindrance and danger. At that time the connection between the anopheles mosquito and malaria was not known, and though Moleli had plentiful supplies of conventional medicines they were in fact no more than a psychological support. Between 1895 and 1896 he was frequently laid up with fever, though the illness was less daunting than either the falling attendance at the services or, towards the end, the growing suffering of the people from locusts and drought. When John White took over the supervision of the station from George Eva he spent most of his first visit encouraging the depressed teacher. They worked together on the church, talking as they did so, making fitted calico curtains and a lectern out of an old packing case.[24]

White's approach to local indifference to the teacher was at once more subtle and understanding than Eva's. "I complained to the chief and his 'indunas' 'if you don't heed our message we must go to those who will.' He begged me not to think of moving the teacher and promised to do better."[25]

Mention was previously made of the way in which the form of Moleli's message fitted for the most part well within the Shona way of thinking. One simple but natural response to his message was described by John White. "I was in a hut trying to carry on a conversation with some people who were preparing their food. It being ready, one of them held up a hand motioning me to stop talking. They then bowed their heads whilst one asked God's blessing on their simple meal."[26]

It seems fitting to close the chapter with two illustrations of the fatherliness of the teacher at Nenguwo. In June 1896, a few weeks before Moleli died, Isaac Shimmin reported the death of Mrs Ramushu. The Molelis and the Ramushus were kinsfolk and had shared the excitement and intimacy of the Mashonaland venture. The husbands had volunteered together and had travelled together in 1892; in 1893 their wives travelled up together to join their husbands in the new country. Mrs Ramushu's death was a blow felt almost equally by them, and Moleli immediately offered help in whatever way he could. So it came about that the little boy Zechariah Ramushu came to lodge with the Moleli

family in the same month. This was the lad who ran out to meet his uncle bringing back the wounded James White, and in exposing himself was immediately killed.[27]

The second illustration is a quotation from one of John White's letters, after Moleli's death. "He was such a good, warm hearted christian. I used to call him 'baba' (father) and indeed a father could not have been kinder and more considerate than he."[28]

Moleli remained the affectionate centre of what was left of the original group which gave him the clamorous welcome. He provided the intellectual satisfaction and emotional support needed to replace the spiritual and cultural loss resultant upon the break with tradition which had been made by those in the inner circle of his congregation.

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1. George Eva to Marshall Hartley. 27.9.94.
2. Gelfand M. **Shona Ritual** Juta and Company, Cape Town. 1959. p 8.
3. It is interesting to speculate whether Moleli's career in Mashonaland would have been longer or educationally more fruitful had he been more learned in the knowledge available in Southern Africa. On balance it seems doubtful.
4. Shimmin, **Journey to Gambisa,** December 1893.
   Eva to Marshall Hartley, 24.6.94.
5. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1894. Mrs Mafema, interview 9.6.67. Marondera's people (who gave the name to Marandellas, Marondera's becoming anglicised to Marandellas) participated in the revolt of 1896. They were the ones who at the outset of violence surrounded Ruzawi Inn. Hodder Williams, **Opus cit.** p 33 ,34.
6. Weavind to Marshal Hartley, 14.5.92.
7. Father A.M. Hartmann was the pioneer Shona scholar who published **An Outline Grammar of the Mashona Language in 1893** and an **English-Mashona Dictionary** in 1894. Even if Moleli knew of these books he would not have been able to benefit from them.
8. From the days of William Shaw, soon after the landing of the 1820 Settlers in the Eastern Province of the Cape, Methodist missionary work had its central strength in the Transkei, where Xhosa was spoken. See Hewson L.A. **An Introduction to South African Methodists** (Standard Press, Standerton, 1952)
9. John Jena, interview 16.7.67.
10. Interview, Chief Zvimba.
11. In her description of learning how to read "baba" Mrs Mafema may have been thinking of Mr Tutani's school which succeeded

Moleli's. By that time some biblical material in Shona was available.
12. Mrs Mafema, interviews, 17.6.65; 9.6.67; John Jena interview, 16.7.67; Patrick Gusha interview 9.5.67.
13. Moleli's reading of the Xhosa Bible, with the palatal and dental clicks of that language, was a source of both surprise and amusement to his Shona hearers. It was in 1830, when W.B. Boyce, a Wesleyan Missionary and a colleague of William Shaw's working in Kaffraria (the present day Transkei of the Eastern Cape), discovered the rule known as the 'Euphonic Concord' which governs the grammatical structure of the Bantu languages. This discovery opened the way to the production of printed literature in Xhosa, and for the publication of the New Testament in 1846, followed by the Old Testament in 1856. These and other books of "considerable importance" were produced at the Wesleyan Press, Mount Coke, Kaffraria. The Appleyard version of the Bible was superceded by a new version in 1887. Du Plessis J., **A History of Christian Missions in South Africa,** (Longmans Green, London 1911) p 298.
14. The first Wesleyan teachers to be stationed at Mpahlelestad, Moleli's home in 1885, were zealous but almost illiterate preachers. Later teachers were better qualified. Healdtown Institution in the Eastern Cape had been established in 1867 for the training of teachers. Whiteside, **Opus cit.** p 283.
15. Mrs Mafema, interview. 9.6.67.
16. It is possible that they did not converse in Zulu, but in Xhosa. Bernard would have been much more likely to learn Xhosa when he was in Cape Town and the Good Hope Mission teachers were Xhosa speaking.
17. Mrs Mafema, interview 17.6.65, Mrs Mangachena, interview 23.6.66. "Lo lo" is a pidgin mixture of English, Afrikaans, and Zulu used by white people to communicate with Africans.
18. Mrs Mafema, interview 9.6.67. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Wesleyan Methodist Church 1894.
19. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Methodist Church 1894. There were no school fees payable. The mission carried the total cost of the operation.
20. Thompson H.C. **Rhodesia and its Government,** London, 1898, quoted by Ranger, **Opus cit.** p 67.
21. George Eva to Marshall Hartley 24.6.94.
22. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Methodist Church 1895.
23. Mrs Mangachena, interview 23.6.66.
24. Gann, **Opus cit.** p 181; Shimmin to Marshall Hartley 18.11.92. Eva to Marshall Hartley 24.6.94.
25. Work and Workers in the Foreign Field; Sept 1895.
26. Ibid.
27. Shimmin, **Our First Martyr;** Mrs Mafema, interview 17.6.1965. See this work, ch. 13.
28. White to Marshall Hartley, 6.9.96.

CHAPTER TEN

THEN THE LOCUSTS CAME AGAIN

It is inconceivable that a teacher of the Wesleyan Methodist tradition, however saintly, would not come into conflict with Shona customs in the 1890's. Moleli certainly did, for there are a number of subjects on which he took a definite line. There is no suggestion, however, that there were any bad relationships as a result of his attitudes.

Sparks were struck, for instance, on whether a father had the right to force his daughter to marry a man, with whose parents the father had entered into matrimonial contract, against her will. Shona tradition clearly affirmed this right. Though extreme measures may have been rare they were occasionally resorted to, and, as described by John White, an adamant daughter might be fastened to the ground and a fire built beside her and fanned until in sheer agony she consented to the arrangements.[1] With the coming of the Christian teacher the question became more complex and the girls began to ask, "Why should we leave our village with its Christian teacher, where we are each day learning about God who loves us; and go to a man we do not want to marry and live in a village where we will no longer be taught about God"?

One such girl fled to Moleli for protection. In doing so she put him in a very difficult position, for in the Shona view he was "Nenguwo's teacher" and so under the chief's authority; but it was quite clear where Moleli's judgment lay in a matter of this kind. He accepted his duty, regardless of personal cost, to provide a refuge for an individual Christian girl, which refuge she enjoyed till Moleli's death when she returned to be under the authority of her father. "Two months ago", wrote John White, "I saw her again, but she was so changed and miserable looking that I hardly recognised her. Even before she told me her sad tale I guessed what had taken place."[2]

This particular incident touches on some differences between the 19th century English attitudes and those of the Shona of the time in respect of the status of women, parental and community authority, and freedom of choice in respect of marriage. To observers from our present vantage point it is quite easy to identify

the reasons for a different emphasis, but Moleli was not in that privileged position. He courageously decided what he believed to be right, acted on his own initiative, and was supported by the missionary for doing so. In taking this action, however, he was in some small but real way posing a threat to the tribal society and its security; thereby in effect emphasising to the elders the simple point, that if children are not obedient to the tribal tradition how could they hope to survive as a clan?[3]

By far the major point of difference between the new authority brought by Moleli and the old, which was embedded in centuries of Shona thought and practice, was on the place of the spirits of the deceased, the spirits who guarded the living. We have seen that the Nenguwo clan were part of the Budya tribe and that their tutelary spirit was Nehoreka, the original chief of the tribe. This ancestral spirit, who expressed himself through the spirit medium, was the spiritual guide and protector of the Budya tribe as a whole. He could foresee events, he was aware of the present circumstances and behaviour of the tribe, and knew how to avoid misfortune and sickness. Depending on his pleasure or displeasure in respect of the living he could send or withhold rain. He controlled the fertility of the land and was able to ensure that seeds produced plentiful crops. This tribal spirit was feared because any act committed against his interests or against the code of the tribe might be followed by a drought. Therefore the community held before it the ideal of trying to live in the identical manner of their dead ancestors in order to ensure the pleasure of the latter. This accounts partly for the profound unreadiness of the Shona to change their habits. All attended the rain ceremonies, and all kept the prescribed days of rest as laid down by the tribal spirit.

In addition to the senior spirit, the tribal tutelary spirit, there were family spirits which guarded individual families, the *mudzimu mudiki wapamusha.* These had come into being when the family had come into being. They did not deal with tribal matters; but only with family concerns and were approached through the head of the family.

In between the senior tribal spirits and the family spirits there were lesser tribal spirits who cared for larger and smaller geographical areas, not strictly defined. These spirits played a leading part in the religious life of the Shona and were linked in a

spiritual chain on the spiritual plane on which they held converse. Nothing was hidden from them.

With little imagination it can be seen what a cardinal place was accorded to the spirits of the deceased in Shona thinking. Relationships with them at the family and tribal level were close and intimate, as intimate as family and tribal relations among the living. It was against these religious beliefs that Moleli spoke and in doing so hit at the most sensitive spot in the Shona tradition. His argument was, by inference, that the place which ought to be given to Christ had been usurped by the ancestral spirits who were in fact subject to Him. To Christ alone effective prayer could and should be made.

We have seen that Moleli's converts publicly repudiated their traditional obedience when they replaced their tribal dress with that newly brought by the teacher. They also declined to participate in the tribal ceremonies around the low wooden stockade built to encircle the muhacha tree (the *rushanga*) at which the spirit medium was possessed by the particular family spirit who revealed himself there. Another informant claims that for certain ceremonies ordinary persons, not only elders, attended the ceremonies at the *Muti usina zita* and that the absence of some children and some adults was noticed with severe disapproval.[4] The absence of even one member of the group required to be present at particular ceremonies which were vital to the tribe was always noted, they believed, by the ancestors. With such obvious aberration from the norm the living could not but fear for their future, their spiritual unity, and their security within their cherished way of life.

All the other differences Moleli had with the Shona in respect of traditional beliefs and practices, some of which will be presently dealt with, were small in comparison with this. This confrontation affected the whole clan, whilst other differences affected only families or individuals. Here his views were found most profoundly unacceptable to the conservative among the Shona. On the other hand, he would be a bold man who would say that any of these differences, either alone or together, would be sufficient to cause the Nenguwo clansmen to rise against a man like Moleli and kill him.

It should be remembered that this conflict was one which Moleli had faced in his own life. Belonging to the Sotho people in the

Northern Transvaal he was familiar with the basic customs and beliefs which are shared by all Bantu tribes. As a child he had been nurtured in beliefs about the ancestral hierarchy, the distant creator god, the practice and customs of marriage, the causes of illness, respect due to elders, and so on. At some time in his life Moleli had made a basic shift in his own beliefs, accepting a belief in God who was neàrer than the traditional god, who had revealed himself through Jesus Christ, to whom the complications of life could be directly brought in prayer, and who took the place of the ancestral spirits. He rejected the spiritual security basic to Bantu life in favour of the security and authority offered by Christianity as preached by the Wesleyan missionaries in the Transvaal. Hence Moleli had an intimate experience of the beliefs which he opposed and he asked for a change of allegiance which he himself had faced.

There were also the ceremonies of the cult of the wandering or alien spirit *(shave)* which Moleli came against. Usually these spirits were believed to be foreigners who had died away from home and had not been given a proper ritual burial. One such spirit would choose a particular person to possess as its medium and in return would bestow on the chosen medium some special gift or talent to enable the medium to carry on the work performed by the spirit in his earthly life. When a *(shave)* spirit first selects his medium he reveals his choice by making the chosen person ill. When the identity of the spirit is established and accepted by the medium, the latter recovers and the medium and spirits operate together in harmony as long as the spirit host fulfills the requirements of the spirit. Isaac Shimmin once observed such a ceremony and afterwards wrote of the "poor degraded natives" who were "ignorant of spiritual matters".[5] Mrs Mafema remembers these ceremonies mainly because she was made to drink snuff mixed with beer, which she found very unpleasant.[6] We have no evidence of Moleli's exact objection to these ceremonies, except that he was against them. Nor have we any evidence that he advocated the use of the whiteman's medicine as a remedy for illness; but it would be interesting to know what the people made of his own frequent attacks of malaria. On the other hand his argument must have carried conviction, for the Rwere sisters' own mother had been a medium of the *shave* spirit, but she abandoned the relationship when she accepted

Moleli's teaching.[7] In thinking of these ceremonies Mrs Mangachena, in her wry way, says, "When they had the *shave* ceremonies people died. Now they do not have the ceremonies, but people still die. So the ceremonies could not have been bad."[8]

There are also traditions that Moleli found himself in opposition to both the practice of witchcraft and the manner in which accusations of witchcraft are dealt with. There is a story that three women accused of witchcraft were banished from a nearby village. On hearing this Moleli investigated the case and arranged for the women to find protection near his home where he allowed them to build their huts. The other story is that he met a witch one night riding naked upon a hyena. He stopped her, Arikunetsa by name, and advised her to cease her nefarious activities. There does not seem to be any need to consider these stories as serious evidence, except as a general indication that he was ill at ease with the manifestations of witchcraft amongst the people with whom he worked.[9] He himself, of course, was a stable person.

There is no other direct or indirect evidence that Moleli came into conflict with any of the other customs which were repugnant to nineteeth century Wesleyans, such as polygamy.[10] On this latter point we can only note that the men who we know were associated with the congregation (Nyamadzeu Rwere, Muriva Nenguwo, Shamu, Musonza, Shamuyedove) were all either single men or married to one wife.

By the end of the rains of 1894 Moleli's horizon was already darkening, and a literal darkening was symbolic of it. The experience of seeing the sun hidden by deep swarms of locusts stretching as far as the eye can see is no longer common; but in those years there was no defence against them. Their coming brought only dismay; villagers could only watch them descending voraciously upon the fields, to leave only when every scrap of green, leaf or cob, had been devoured. George Eva's report to the Synod in 1895 was dismal, "No place in the District has suffered more (than Nenguwo) through last year's locust plague and exceptional drought than this. Many people have been on the verge of starvation, subsisting often entirely on roots and wild fruits." So it was quite likely that long before the next spoilation struck, the rinderpest, the Shona people were already seeking out

both local and supra-tribal mediums to obtain advice on the cure of their ills.[11]

In addition to their spiritual gifts the mediums were shrewd men and men of affairs, in touch with Shona opinion. Through the network of communication between the lesser and the greater mediums they quickly became aware of details of information and grievances in different areas and at different levels. Depending upon the nature of questions put to them, their judgement on specific ills affecting the day by day lives of the people of the district or sub-district would be much affected by the consensus of opinion whispered round the family fire, in private conversation, or voiced openly in the circle around which the elders sat in consultation. "Why are the locusts so persistent and ferocious"? "Why is it that though we have kept the rituals, made prayers and offerings, the rains have failed to come?" The Shona believed, as we have seen, in the increased power of the deceased elders, and in their access to the creator and preserver of life. There seemed to be no reason why the safety, health, and prosperity of the tribe should not be effectively provided for unless they were displeased and therefore had reason to withhold provision.

It was an article of faith among the Shona that disrespect of tribal or family guardian spirits was sooner or later punished by insufficient rains, or by outright drought, or by locusts or other pests. Therefore, when drought came, or locusts decimated their crops, they naturally sought the help of the tribal spirits to find out how they had been offended. Knowing the cause, the people would do their utmost to propitiate the ancestral spirits.[12]

The procedure in brief is as follows. The family spirit, on being informed of the disquiet among the community affecting individual families, would instruct each family to send a delegate to the chief. From among these the chief would select a few to consult the tribal spirit. At this consultation, with its specific ritual, the reasons for the suffering among the people and the method of bringing it to an end was given.[13]

In cases of common anguish it would not be surprising if many people participated in speculation as to the cause of the distress and searched for an explanation of the serious disruption in the traditional relationships between themselves and their spiritual elders. Obviously the new factor in the situation as far as the

Nenguwo clan was concerned was the presence of the teacher Moleli who taught doctrines and customs which were alien to those of the ancestors. So as they sat hungry in their empty winter kitchens, or met each other in the fields which had lost their harvests, they discussed the dress of the teacher's converts, the absence of some of them at the prescribed periods of family and tribal worship, the threat to parental authority, the withholding of ancestral respect, all the time weighing the prospects of their security. Words were spoken, sometimes in bitterness, sometimes in despair; but all of them in one way or another, reached the ears of the senior spirit medium, who prepared himself for a judgement on what should be done to remove the causes of their suffering.

During this time Moleli and his family were not idle or careless of the suffering of their friends. From their garden and from their stores of meal they distributed such as they had in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of their friends.[14] This too, did not pass unnoticed.

We can only infer what judgement the senior medium of the Nenguwo clan was giving in the years immediately preceeding the Mashona revolt; but it most certainly was not the drastic one to which headman Chakadenga, for instance, of the house of Nyahunzvi, was listening. It was from Chakadenga that the pressure on the chief may well have come not to allow the children to school; for Chakadenga was in touch with the mediums who clearly identified the teacher, and the whites with whom he associated, as the disrupting influence. Reasons have already been advanced why Nenguwo originally accepted the teacher and why the tribal medium supported him in the acceptance. There is no evidence to support any suggestion that either the chief or the majority of the mediums accepted the view that the original welcome should be reversed, though circumstances during the ensuing three years had altered. The advantages of having the teacher in their midst still outweighed any possible advantages in removing him. Chakadenga became the leading spokesman for the radical view, he pleaded for the school to be closed and the children removed from what he considered to be a pernicious teaching. When he failed in his objective, he removed himself and his family away from the foreign influence,[15] away from Masvingo, towards the south west corner of the clan's territory.

At the school itself the attendance dwindled, both on Sundays and weekdays, to twelve boys and eighteen girls. What a contrast it presented, with its disappointed teacher and apprehensive children, to what it was three years earlier when it had an exuberant school population of one hundred and fifty girls and boys, supported by an equal number of eager adults.[16]

Moleli was human. He was depressed and may have blamed himself. Not for a moment, though, did his outward ardour lessen, or his persistence, in doing the work he loved and believed in. In the midst of almost total discouragement, like an unexpected spring time, there appeared for him some refreshment. What he lost in numbers he gained in adult commitment. The number of adults seeking baptism rose to thirteen.[17] These had firmly decided to ally themselves to the teacher and his teaching, and to reject the well argued case of those who set their faces against the white man's church and school.

So Moleli was not daunted. He was characteristically hopeful that after darkness would come light. He still went to villages away from his own, to be with men at their work and rest; sometimes to be cursed, sometimes to be ignored, sometimes they walked away from him, as from a leper. The horn, that forlorn African bell, continued to call; the remnant faithfully continued to come to him, especially the children who loved him, and the women to Mrs Moleli.[18] Day by day he wrestled with and overcame the dark thoughts of despair which rose unbidden in his mind.

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1. "Wiri" Edwards describes how on one occasion he actually found a girl staked to the ground and being tortured for this reason. Edwards, **Opus cit.** p 45.
2. Andrews C.F; **John White of Mashonaland** (Hodder and Stoughton, 1935,) pp 110 ff.
3. For a description of Shona marriage customs see Holleman, J.F. **Shona Customary Law,** (OUP, Cape Town 1954) pp 72-201 but especially page 74.
4. Interview between chief Nenguwo's son Machiti and headman Mujakachi and the Principal, Waddilove Training Institution, 1953.
5. McDonald, **Opus cit;** p 53, quoting Shimmin.
6. Mrs Mangachena, interview 23.6.66.
7. Mrs Mangachena, interview, 9.6.67. Professor Gelfand's books are useful on this subject. See **Shona Ritual** which describes the place of the ancestral spirits in the traditional life of the Zezuru; **Shona Religion** which deals with the same subject in respect of the Korekore; and **The Sick African** which deals in part with the illness caused by spirit possession. In the Shona view death was always caused by a spirit.
8. Mrs Mangachena, interview 23.6.66.
9. Gelfand M, **The Shona Witch,** (E & S Livingstone, Ltd. London and Edinburgh 1967) pp 163-171 describes the depth of fear and witchcraft in traditional Shona society. Upon being asked about witchcraft in those days Shamuyedove's explosive remark was, "It was there!"
10. I have tried to avoid leading questions in interview. Informants very easily project later ideas into earlier periods.
11. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Methodist Church, 1895. Famine and fear of famine were ever present threats in Shona life.
12. Gelfand, **Shona Ritual,** p 37.
13. Gelfand, **Opus cit;** pp 67-69.
14. George Eva, report to Methodist Synod. 1895.
15. Mrs Mafema, interview 3.1.69.
16. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Methodist Church 1895.
17. Ibid.
18. Mrs Mafema, interview 18.3.67.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BEFORE THE FALL OF THE AXE

While Moleli continued his tasks amidst increasing difficulties there were movements in secret tribal places, within and without Nenguwo's borders, which were in time to destroy him. Why was it that a man of grace, zeal, and affection should be killed by a people who in later years came to see what he had brought — namely education — was their most vital need? The answer to the question may be found more easily if we first ask, "Who killed him"? If the poeple who killed him are first recognised the motives will be more easily identified.

The evidence and statements collected at the preliminary enquiries before a magistrate, concerning the outbreak of hostilities south-west of Marandellas in June 1896, clearly establish Chizengeni's village as the centre from which armed men set out to kill James White.[1] It is, in parenthesis, not at all clear that they also set out to kill Moleli. "I have a little kraal near Chizengeni's. I remember the rising and hearing Chizengeni say, 'I want an *impi'* (band of soldiers)..." testified Shambawaneza. Chiriseri, who led the band which went to the mission, also set out from Chizengeni's. Of the evening following the attack he said, "I slept at Chizengeni's and gave him four cattle."[2] In 1893 headman Chizengeni was in alliance with chief Nenguwo. His people lived within a stone's throw of the chief's residence.

"We married their daughters", asserts the present headman. They were not Budya people at all, but were originally under chief Zimunya of the Jindwe tribe south of what is now Mutare. Sometime in the past this handful of people had to flee from their parent body for some offence, and they wandered across Mashonaland seeking some refuge where they could settle peacefully. Eventually they formed an association with Nenguwo in the heart of the Zezuru country. Though the Nenguwo clan was larger than the Chizengeni group they were both in the same position; both strangers in the stronghold of people from whom they clearly distinguished themselves; both had fled from their homelands; both were too small numerically to be really independent. Therefore it seemed sensible to them both to enter into a contract

through marriage, in which they were committed to support each other in time of external threat. Chizengeni's tribal spirit was not Nehoreka, but a much less known one named Mufurirwa.[3]

After Moleli had been at Nenguwo's for some time a difference of opinion arose between Chizengeni and Nenguwo. Chizengeni maintained the teacher's presence was offensive. The result was that the Chizengeni people moved away, just before 1896, to the position where they now live, on the banks of the Nyatsime river, about four miles to the north-west of Moleli's station. This ended their relationship with Nenguwo, for they exchanged their covenant with him for one with paramount chief Seki. Chizengeni and his advisers no doubt calculated that their future would be more secure, if they were to have this new tie than if they were to remain under the previous petty chieftainship. Among the soldiers under Chizengeni and Chiriseri who set out to kill the white man living in Maringari, as the area under chief Nenguwo was called, were Kaseke and Mashangwe. Both of these were Seki men.[4]

Chiriseri was a headman under paramount chief Kunzwi-Nyandoro who lived fifty miles to the north-east of Salisbury.[5] It is possible that he had lived for some time near Chizengeni. He had one of Nenguwo's daughters as a wife.[6]

Among muster of warriors was one man named Mashonganyika who was described by Nenguwo in his evidence as a "chief" who "had ten men there," (i.e. at the attack on James White)[7], paramount chief Mashonganyika, an elderly[8] man who lived in the Shawasha area, was at that time being visited by Native Commissioner Campbell and so it could not have been he who was there.[9] The man referred to may well have been one of Mashonganyika's several sons, each of whom had gone out from their father's kraal to assist in the organisation of attacks against specific white men.[10]

The name Ranga also appears among those involved in the disturbances on 21st June. According to Mashonganyika he was the one who fired the old elephant gun, a muzzle loader, at the farmer James White.[11] Nearly eighteen months later, when the officials went out to arrest the people wanted for murder and attempted murder at both Mendamu farm and the mission, long after resistance was generally over and normality was returning,

Ranga was still full of fight and used his gun to drive off the police who were being guided by Shamu. In the melee Ranga was killed.[12] The point about this man is that he was likely to have originated in the Charter/Range district, for sub-chief Ranga was under paramount chief Nyashangwe. The Charter district has been described as "the nursery of the Rebellion".[13]

If these details are correct, and there is no reason why they should not be, it seems that amongst the soldiers who made the various attacks in Maringari there were leaders and men who came from paramountcies of Kunzwi-Nyadoro, Mashonganyika, Seki and Nyashangwe, as far away as eighty miles to the north and fifty miles to the south-west.

Kunzwi and Mashonganyika were neighbours in the Mrewa/Shawasha areas. They were both prominent in their resistance to the settlers prior to 1896, and were united in common cause throughout the revolt.[14] They also had an intimate association with Gumbo-reshumba, the medium of Chaminyuka. Prior to 1896 the man called Kagubi operated as a spirit medium in chief Chiquaqua's area and was known as a provider of medicine to ensure success in trapping game. Chiquaqua was also another chief prominent in resistance against the whites. Kagubi was consulted prior to 1896 by Kunzwi-Nyandoro and was son-in-law to Mashonganyika. The importance of Kagubi and his part in the revolt will come out later.[15]

One further point worth noting is that the only man of significance among the raiders who might have known Moleli did not lead his men to kill Moleli, but to deal with James White. It was the stranger, Chiriseri, who went to Nenguwo's village and his declared intention too was to kill White.

The information yielded by the preliminary investigations already mentioned made it clear that Moleli was not killed by local people, but by people who were hardly personally known to him. This in turn means that he was not killed because of personal failure, or because of individual dislike, or necessarily because of his school or church-work. The motives which gave rise to violence were shared "by all the chiefs of the Zezuru" and were spread as far as Thaba ziKa Mambo, 200 miles to the west, where Mkwati the recognised emanation of the Shona deity Mwari presided and called for country-wide uprisings. It is clear that it was not only local people like Chizengeni who were caught

up in the stream of vehemence. It is also worth noting that the desire to rise was shared among widely separated groups and at the same time. This suggests an efficient system of communication along which news could be rapidly transmitted.

Having established who killed Moleli, reasons must now be sought for the frustrations which drove them to kill a person who was not only a good man by any standards, but also a stranger. Wrongs and failures of communication, which did disservice to settler and Shona alike, existed throughout Mashonaland and have been extensively set out by Professor Ranger. It is neither necessary nor possible in a local study to try to repeat what he has already done in a disciplined, meticulous and scholarly way.[16] What may be done, however, is to collect local information about these dissatisfactions and insert them as illustrations into a summary of the state or relationships at that time.

After six years of settler occupation the Shona deliberately set their faces utterly against the whites. What was it in the attitude of the white settlers as a whole which the Shona found so disturbing and offensive? What produced such an unflattering image of the settlers in the mind of the Shona that they were left with no alternative but to rise, with the intention of killing every white person and their camp followers in the country?

Between September 1890 and June 1896 the pioneer whites built up a number of ideas, which were held for the most part uncritically, about the natives of Mashonaland. Ideas about themselves, held equally uncritically, together with the unquestioned assumptions about the Shona, were an essential part of the conditions which led to the rebellion in which Modumedi Moleli was killed.

It is not possible, or desirable, to make a fully documented study about the attitudes of the white settlers; but only to outline briefly, however inadequately, how they appear from the present perspective. At first glance the statements to follow may seem little more than a list of unsubstantiated assertions. Nevertheless, for those who are familiar with the writings of a cross section of the white population of the time (hunters, missionaries, traders, miners and officials alike) it would not be difficult to assemble the necessary evidence.

Certain qualifications of the generalisations to follow must first of all be made. Individual pioneers carried these assumptions in

varied degrees and manner. They were not held by all of them all the time; they were not assumed in grosser forms on all occasions; and awareness of and discussion of particular points was not entirely absent during the whole of the period. These assumptions were, however, held by the majority of the pioneers for most of the time and to a degree which was the primary cause of the development of the will to and spirit of revolt on the part of the Shona. Therefore, real responsibility for the death of the teacher lay upon the pioneers as a whole.

One final qualification is that the identification of major areas of inadequacy in pioneer attitudes is not to be read as a general denigration of the white settlers and their achievements. However much they were unable to see themselves as the Shona saw them it does not distract from their courage, enterprise, sincerity, optimism under difficult conditions, integrity within their own tradition and such like qualities which are not in dispute.

The pioneers believed they had every right to occupy Mashonaland, they did not question the right of the Charter Company to grant land in payment of services rendered or to allocate it for development purposes. Part of their belief in their right to occupy and administer Mashonaland was based on their confidence that they were superior to the Shona in all essential respects. From this followed the assumption that the life of one white man was of virtually infinite value, while the life of one native was rather less significant. The property of the white man also had special sanctity and the loss of one white man's possessions justified severe and general punishment as a warning against further recurrence of property offences.

Further major assumptions were that the pioneers had brought the Shona protection from the ravages of the Ndebele; that the protection ought to elicit expressions of gratitude from them; that because of it whites were justified in expecting the Shona to work regularly for wages and so contribute to the economic development of the new country; that economic development was good for the Shona and they ought to have the good sense to see this.

In the field of administration it was assumed that the rough bush justice meted out by the white man was in the main fair; that the individual white man had the right to administer that kind of justice against which appeal procedures were not necessary; that in the matters of dispute it was not incumbent upon

them to listen much to the circular talk of the Shona; and that more progress would be made by making the Shona do what the white man saw was good for him than by spending valuable time and money on explanation and persuasion.

On the moral and cultural level it was held that the Shona was a cowed race who understood force more than reason; that they had no long remembered tradition; that they were hardly, if at all, capable of creative activity; that they were morally and religiously degenerate. In the broad sense it was taken for granted that the presence of the white man was virtually in every way to the advantage of the Shona; that there was little need to weigh up the importance of the impression made upon the Shona by the whites; and that the country was at their feet to do as they wished.

In the face of the extensive economic activity carried on by the settlers, with the accompanying infringements of the chief's authority and the disruption of lives, it was inevitable that the Shona paramounts began to ask by what right this intrusiveness was carried on. "Have we ever been defeated in war by these newcomers"? they asked. Their views were in complete contrast to those held among the settlers. How the European attitude seemed from the Shona point of view has been well expressed in the words, "They couldn't listen to the talk of the Africans as owners of the land".[17]

John White, the Methodist missionary, commented as follows after the "slaughter of the chiefs"[18] in Lomagundi. "Unworthy or inefficient fellows are sent out there, they do practically what they like and these affairs occur . . . Some of these fellows think less of shooting a Mashona than they do of shooting their dog. The burning of huts, stealing of meal and raping of women are common occurrences. Our protest here is ignored". The following year he was forced to prosecute a native commissioner for sending a policeman to procure a girl for himself. Though he won his case he made himself very unpopular among the settlers, as has been described by his biographer. Not only were natives afraid of bringing cases to court, they were so unfamiliar with European procedure and with being in their company that they were very easily confused and said things which weakened their case. White also noticed, with some alarm, the complete lack of confidence in the white man's word on the part of the Shona.[19]

The cardinal complaint of the Shona was that the colonists were

there.[20] One other associated complaint which brought their dissatisfaction to sharp focus was the requirement that they should, from 1894 onwards, pay hut tax. To the Shona, payment of tax was an acknowledgement of defeat; to the officials of the Chartered Company non-payment was a defiance which could not be tolerated. So began the succession of raids, refusal to pay, punishment expeditions and efforts to recover stock by force. "We did not wish to pay tax," insists chief Mudzimurema, speaking simply and plainly.[21]

Resistance to hut tax was made stronger by abuses in its collection. The first native commissioner in the Marandellas area reported, "in their hurry to start tax collection the Company entered into an arrangement with a local farmer to collect sheep, goats, cattle, failing cash, on a share basis".[22] Marandellas was one of the many areas in which there was resistance to the tax collection. Weale, referring to the Marandellas District, wrote "on many occasions the messenger boys were driven off by the natives, who refused to pay hut tax, and in some cases the natives fired on them, telling them they would do the same to the white man, and it was found necessary to arm a percentage of the messengers with Martin rifles and ball cartridges for self defence in future."[23]

"One of the greatest mistakes made by the Government at this time was the employment of Matabele police and messengers in the Mashonaland Districts," wrote "Wiri" Edwards after the Rebellion.[24]

"The messengers and police were unsupervised when they came to the villages", explains Chief Mudzimurema, "they could not count and took one stalk from the thatch of the house of each married man as proof of the number of houses in each village. Then they came and took our cattle and goats, leaving us nothing. They gave us no explanation. They killed and ate our goats without our consent and forced young girls to be with them in the huts at night. Those who objected to the behaviour of the messengers were beaten. The messengers offended us deeply, for if a man opposed them they would find the mother-in-law of that person and force them to have sexual relations."[25]

Thinking back on those days John Jena says, "Europeans did wrong in that they claimed the cattle of the people. Native Commissioners made Africans policemen and these were sent to claim cattle from the chiefs. If they did not give cattle they were beaten. *They were treated roughly so that if they became angry then the European would be free to fight them.*"[26]

Livestock was the wealth of the Shona. It was not surprising therefore that they resented losing them to unacknowledged foreign rulers and that this resentment built up to a dangerous level in the absence of any machinery for "venting their grievances in a constitutional manner."[27] In this way the Shona became receptive to a radical message, offering them a way to rid themselves of the evils that had come upon them.

The year 1896 was indeed a year of disaster. Not only did it bring the devastation by the locusts and the virtual complete failure of the crops, but also, early in the year, in March, an epizootic disease, rinderpest, broke out somewhere in Central Africa, swept through Rhodesia and on into the Boer Republics in the south, destroying nearly half the cattle population in Southern Africa. Whole herds of cattle, when infected, died in a very short time. "This plague", wrote Isaac Shimmin, "is almost as great a calamity as the (Matabele) Rebellion."[28] Neither the disease nor its cure were previously known in Mashonaland. In the Marandellas region and elsewhere the Administration sent out men to shoot herds of cattle to prevent its spread. This "was misunderstood by the native; and, even worse from the native point of view, the carcasses of the dead and slaughtered cattle were burned or buried. 'Whoever heard of food being destroyed like this? If our cattle die, well, we can eat them; but these people bury and burn them, and grain is scarce. They want us to die of famine.' "[29]

In summing up his chapter on the Administration of Mashonaland Ranger declares, "For the paramounts the tax demand came as the last in a series of grievances and led them to plan open and general armed resistance. These plans were bound to enjoy the overwhelming support of the Shona peoples. Company rule had meant for those Shona who lived in areas affected by white economic activity not only an infringement of the authority of the chiefs but a great disruption of their own lives. It had meant the loss of stock and sometimes of land; it had meant forced labour. Yet the Shona had neither been conquered by whites nor come to terms with them in a series of agreements. When there

was added to all this an unprecedented sequence of natural disasters — drought, locusts and the spread of cattle disease which led to the whites shooting much of the stock that had not been taken for hut tax — the mass determination of the Shona to rid themselves of the white pressure was confirmed."[30]

So in the minds of men who lived as far away as the villages of paramount chiefs Mashonganyika, Kunzwi-Nyandoro and Seki, as well as at Chizengeni's, there arose the intention to kill a particular white man, James White. Into that vortex of violence Modumedi Moleli was drawn, partly because his style of life as a foreigner was different from that of the Shona and partly because he courageously chose to perform an act of charity.

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1. James White of Mendamu Farm, Moleli's nearest neighbour, is not to be confused with John White the missionary. His part in the story will soon become clear.
2. Evidence of Shambawaneza, Regina v. Chizengeni, Maswingi and Mashindu, HC/M 243; Chiriseri's statement, Regina v. Chiriseri HC/M 244.
3. Headman Chizengeni, interview 16.11.68. He seemed to find it difficult to recall the past. "We changed our name so that our relatives would not follow us" he said.
4. Tagamania's evidence, HC/M 244.
5. In the trial the accused's place of residence is described as "Ngandoro's". European interpreters and clerks ("Wiri" Edwards acted as interpreter in these trials) were not always accurate in catching the Shona sounds and recording them. Chief Mudzimurema confirms that Chiriseri was under the chieftainship of Kunzwi-Nyandoro. Edwards in his **Reminiscences** records an incident in this village. See also the article **"Wiri"** in NADA 1960 p 98.
6. Phani Shamuyedove, interview 3.1.69.
7. Nenguwo's evidence, Regina v. Mazani, Kaseke and Mashonganyika, HC/M 245.
8. Ranger, **Op. cit.** p 68.
9. Regina v Mashonganyika, Gonto and others HC/M 355. The date of this attack is given as 20th June, and was chosen as a convenient date because the exact date was not known. For this reason the same date was used in several trials relating to a number of widely scattered attacks.
10. The name Mashonganyika appears in several trials relating to widely scattered attacks. See HC/M nos. 209;252;255;297;300 and 337.
11. Mashonganyika's statement, HC/M 245.
12. Shamu's **Reminiscences** in the Waddilove Papers.
13. Ranger, **Op. cit;** p 202.

14. Ranger, **Ibid,** gives information of Kunzwi's career on pp. 85, 86; and of Mashonganyika's career on pp 189, 190.
15. Chidziwa J; **The History of the Vashawasha,** NADA 1964 pp16-33. And Ncube, R.M.M. **The True Story re Chaminyuka and Lobengula,** NADA 1962, pp 59-69; Ranger, **Opus cit.** p 216.
16. Ranger, **Opus cit;** Chapter two.
17. Chivanda C.G. **The Mashona Rebellion in Oral Tradition; The Mazoe District.** Honours Seminars Paper, UCRN. Quoted by Ranger, **Opus cit.** pp 390-394
18. See Eva, G. **Report on a Police Visit to Hartleton** Sept. 1894 Methodist Archives, London.
19. John White to Marshall Hartley, 1.9.94; 22.11.95.
20. Note the conclusion reached by Philip Mason in **The Birth of a Dilemma; the Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia.** (OUP London 1958) p 204 that the Shona were predisposed to be rid of their new masters.
21. Chief Mudzimurema, interview 19.10.68.
22. Quoted by Ranger, **Opus cit;** p 70, but no adequate archival reference given.
23. Weale's Reminiscences WE/3/2/5
24. Edwards, W. **The Wanoe,** NADA 1926 p 19.
25. Chief Mudzimurema. 19.10.68.
26. John Jena, interview 16.7.67. The italics are mine, to illustrate the manner in which older Shona interpret European motives of the time.
27. John White, letter to the **Methodist Times,** Jan. 1897.
28. Isaac Shimmin to Marshall Hartley. 17.6.96.
29. Edwards "Wiri", **The Wanoe,** NADA 1926, pp 20-21. and his **Reminiscences,** p 67. Edwards was writing about the Marandellas area.
30. Ranger, **Opus cit;** p 87.

CHAPTER TWELVE

LET THE FOREIGNERS BE KILLED

"The M'Lenga said all the white people must be killed, so I gathered all my people and went to White's farm", explained Chizengeni.[1] In the evidence of the second witness in the trial, Chinende, who was White's housegirl, the word Kagubi is substituted for M'Lenga.[2] It is not necessary for us to discuss the meaning of the word M'Lenga or Kagubi, for the person referred to has been identified as Gumbo-reshumba, the prophetical medium of the Kagubi spirit. It was this man that unified the Shona and directed the course of the revolt in Mashonaland in 1896.[3]

As the realisation spread among the Shona that the whites had come to stay, that they now considered themselves owners of the land, that the hut-tax and forced labour were essential features of their administration; as the suspicion spread that the dishonour to which their ancestral guardians expressed such repugnance was due directly to the whites, the conviction began to grow that the only way in which they could restore their former relationship with their spiritual elders was to go to the root of the trouble and rid themselves of the white man by violent means. This was the plain and direct message which Kagubi gave.

"I have heard a voice from the rocks and trees saying, 'Kill the white man but do not take their things.' "[4] "Wiri" Edwards, who was later to be the interpreter at the trials of many of those accused of murder during the revolt, as well as at the trial of Kagubi, was convinced, having heard the evidence, that the man used ventriloquism. There are in Shona history a number of references which imply the use of this skill and it seems likely that Kagubi was a master of it. However, as he was unlikely to have used it with intent to deceive, there is insufficient reason to doubt his integrity when using it in those moments when he became, in the eyes of the Shona, the spirit whose name he took.[5] When possessed by his spirit Kagubi showed striking gifts of personality and oratory and his message found deep and immediate response in those who heard him. His call was taken up by local and district

spirit mediums and his fame spread, for this was the kind of message for which they had a predilection.

In April 1896 Mkwati, one of the main leaders of the Ndebele rising, sent a message from Thaba zika Mambo, the traditional stronghold of the Rozwi people, to paramount chief Mashiangombi offering his assistance if a rising could be organised in Mashonaland similar to the highly successful one at the time being conducted in Matabeleland.[6] By that time Kagubi's fame had spread to Mashiangombi, with the result that he was one of the first to be called to the latter's headquarters after Mkwati's communication. His emissaries were among those of Mashiangombi's who travelled to Mkwati to hear more of what Mkwati had in mind. In the meantime Kagubi based himself at Mashiangombi's kraal and from then he seemed to establish himself in a charismatic position of leadership among men mobilising themselves for a war of liberation.[7]

After the return of the envoys from Mkwati the decision was made to call further meetings of representatives of Shona leaders, and messengers were sent out to all the paramount chiefs of central Mashonaland, summoning them to send representatives to Kagubi "to get medicine for the locusts",[8] a phrase with obvious meaning to the initiated. So delegates from the Shona religious and political authorities assembled to receive stirring news from Matabeleland and to be urged to rise themselves in unison in Mashonaland. A witness describes one scene in which Kagubi would rush into the circle of the assemblage shouting out, "I am the son of God"; and another in which he would go into a a public trance, wearing horns and under the possession of the spirits, and give instructions that all the white people should be killed.[9] Once he had been accepted by common consent to be what he claimed to be, it was not surprising that his word was taken as a binding law requiring fulfillment to the letter. There were to be many cases of the killing of the whites which were defended in court on the basis that the accused were only accommodating themselves to divine instructions. One such case involved headman Chizengeni himself.

From these gatherings the messages went out to paramount and petty chiefs; to supra-tribal, district, and local mediums; and especially, for our purpose, to paramount chiefs Mashonga-

nyika, Kunzwi-Nyandoro, Seki, Sosve, and headman Chizengeni whose territory lay between that of the latter two paramounts. "All petty *mhondoros* (spirit mediums) were communicating continually with Kagubi".[10] "Kagubi sent two messengers to Mashonganyika", testified the warrior, Zhanta. Ranger guesses that Panashe, the bandit son of Kunzwi-Nyandoro was the senior intermediary between Mashiangombi and his father.[11]

The consequences of this meeting were felt not only by Moleli. For instance, it was the son of paramount chief Zvimba who brought Kagubi's message to his father.[12] Consequently, upon Kagubi's instructions, James Anta, the Methodist teacher at Hartleton in the Lomagundi district, together with all of his own family and eighteen of his congregation who tried to defend him, were done to death sometime in June that year. Among the whites to be killed were included those who associated with them.[13]

The messengers who travelled from Mashiangombi's carrying Kagubi's message are still remembered among the older people of the Chiota reserve. Chief Mudzimurema, who was at the time old enough to herd cattle and who lived at Chirimuka on the east bank of the Sabi near Charter, remembers these men who wore bands of black beads round their wrists as their badge of office.[14] Owing to the fear of informers or of native police patrols picking up the message it was not talked about openly, and extraordinary precautions were taken to veil the prescription. White people were talked about as "locusts" or "white cobras" to be killed, and the general operation was discussed using the imagery of going on a big hunt for wild animals.[15]

Within the Mhondoro cult, as opposed to the Mwari cult, each paramount chief had his own special medium. To these men, or women in some cases, the messages first came. The mediums were, as we have seen, deeply aware of the suffering caused by natural disasters and through the presence of white settlers. The problem of what to do about these matters and what advice to give to the petitioners had been before them in some cases for several years.

Within different tribes the problems had different dimensions. Paramount chief Seki, for instance, had long before declined a request by Moleli to open a school at his headquarters. This shows not only a spirit of sufficiency in respect of his own traditions, but also a confidence in resisting the pressures generated by the European presence. A felt ability to resist influences threatening

subversion of the traditional independence of the tribe, coupled with an experience of injustice, was an ideal preparation for the acceptance of the radical solution being offered for their dilemmas and being passed secretly from village to village. Seki's principal spirit medium and the paramount were at one in accepting and pressing Kagubi's law. The spirit medium offered it himself at the tribal ceremonies, thereby strengthening it and making it ever more acceptable to headmen and local spirit mediums. Chizengeni, now in alliance with Seki, received it readily. The traditional communication system was now electrified and brought into full operation. This was the model in many of the Zezuru paramountcies at that time.

Some paramounts and their senior tribal spirit mediums were divided about the message and some united in their opposition to it. The Methodist teachers in the Gambisa district among the Njanja tribe, also Zezurus, were secure. Not only did they appear quite safely one morning in Salisbury two months after the outbreak of the hostilities but they also returned to their stations long before the end of the rebellion at a time when central Mashonaland was for the most part quite unsafe for the white people.[16] On the other hand Kunzwi-Nyandoro's medium advised against participation in the hazardous project, but the chief overruled him.[17]

Chief Nenguwo himself and his younger brother medium, Rwasika, were quite unwilling to consider the call because they had no confidence that the enterprise would be successful and, probably more to the point, they could not view the possible success of the endeavour with much pleasure because it would mean a return to their even more precarious insecurity of their immediate past. Rather than wishing to kill the whites at that stage they needed their protection.[18]

Local violence erupted from Chizengeni's village. There are now no known survivors of the attacking party. Careful investigation has not revealed anyone who has any personal memory of the atmosphere or activity within the village in the early days of June 1896. One can only try to reconstruct something of the way in which preparations were made from other descriptions we do have.[19]

In Chizengeni's village there was probably an active and inspiring local spirit medium who gave the lead, a man known as

a hunter or warrior. Both his reputation and his message gave the lead, making it possible for them to begin singling out particular people to be attacked, in pursuance of Kagubi's inclusive but general command. Chiriseri himself may have been such a man. On the indictment sheet he was described as a hunter and in the trial identified as "the big induna (headman)", and considered to be more important than Chizengeni himself.[20]

Preparations were made at night, in secret, most likely away from the village, at some chosen spot among the rocks or hills nearby. There the drumming, singing of songs of war, dancing and sacrifice of goats went on well into the night. In the eerie darkness lit by the shafts of flame from the fire, the Mhondoro exhorted the men to courage, painted pictures of their return to peace with the ancestral spirits, and promised safety, upon the word of Kagubi, from the bullets of their enemies. There too they planned their attack, considered the help they were to receive from neighbours, planned their timing, and heard information giving details of preparations being made by other villages for the war against the foreigners. Thus fortified they returned to their homes in the early hours of the morning after the completion of a further stage in their designs.

On the cold winter's nights of the 19th and 20th June signal fires began burning brightly on the hill tops in the Marandellas district, indicating that the time had come for the tribesmen to rise and put into effect the law of Kagubi, who had spoken with the authority of God himself.[21]

There seemed to be some hesitancy among the Chizengeni based insurgents. Early on the morning of the 20th, when Marandellas itself (it consisted of little more than the Ruzawi Inn) was being surrounded by chief Marondera's men, one group of soldiers went at the break of day to James White's farm and assembled behind the cattle kraal. There they closed in on the messenger returning from James White on Mendamu farm to Trooper Fitzgerald at the Ruzawi Inn. This bearer had been sent out the previous day to warn James White of the threatening situation and advising him to seek safety. As James White was unaware of any change of attitude among his employees, among whom were Chinandi and Shamu her husband, both of the Nenguwo clan, he declined the invitation. For this false sense of security he was within two days to pay with his life. On meeting the soldiers

the messenger found he was related to some of them and so he was allowed to go on his way.[22] The insurgents did not attack that day, possibly because they were told that an armed soldier, Lieutenant Bremner, had arrived the previous evening.

Nor did the group which went to the mission initiate any violence on the Saturday though we know from Mrs Moleli that they were there that day. Possibly it was only that night, after they had heard of definite successful action in other places, and after they had seen the fires burning for the second night running, that their wills to act were finally galvanised into action.

So the fatal night approached. By that time, perhaps, the war medicine had arrived from Mashiangombi's. The drums surged and the hand pianos plucked, sacrifices were made, final instructions given, and all fear driven from their thoughts. Then the medicine was applied, "men would form a queue, dip first the right hand and then the left into the medicine and finally make a mark on the forehead with some special piece of grass, oiled."[23]

So, at about 5 a.m. on Sunday 21st June 1896 headman Chizengeni sent out his order to all those who had been through the ceremonies of preparation, including the men from the other paramounts who were supporting him, to assemble at the appointed place. When they were all together he said, "Let us go now and kill the white man."

There were two bands of soldiers. The first under Chizengeni was made up of his own men, plus Mashonganyika and his ten men, and men from Seki, making a total of about two dozen warriors. Chiriseri and his tribesmen followed shortly afterwards to the mission. In the case of the former the arrangement was that as they approached the farm the main body of the troop would hold back in the undergrowth while four chosen men approached the homestead as if they were on some normal errand, in order to allay suspicion. Chizengeni went on a circuitous route to the cattle kraal to be ready to release the cattle. Standing outside the single roomed, daub and wattle thatched house, the four men called or knocked in the usual fashion, to attract White, but not to alarm him. He came out and enquired, "What do you want"?

"Brass wire", they replied.[24]

1. Chizengeni's evidence on being arraigned for the murder of Lieutenant Bremner on James White's farm. Regina v Chizengeni, Maswingi and Mashindu, HC/M 243.

2. The use of this word by Chinende makes it clear that the Nenguwo clan were aware of what was happening in the country as a whole.

3. See Regina v Kagubi and Dekwende, HC/M 253.

4. Chidziwa, **Opus cit;** pp 16-33.

5. Edwards, **Opus cit;** p 68. Ventriloquism is, for instance, apparently associated with the inception of the Chaminuka cult. See Gelfand, **Shona Ritual,** pp 14 and 30. He also describes a class of spirit mediums who definitely use ventriloquism, **Ibid;** 106. For Shona scepticism of mythology associated with this phenomena see National Archives manuscript N3/33/8.

6. For a full discussion of the role of Mkwati in the Shona Revolt see Ranger, **Opus cit,** chapter six. It is probable that future writers on this subject will be heavily indebted to Ranger whose researches have thrown light on a hitherto obscure subject. See also Kenny to CNC. N 1/1/6 whose intelligence reports substantially support Ranger's findings.

7. Ranger, T.O. **The Role of Religion in the Rebellions** in Stokes E. and Brown R., **The Zambesian Past,** Manchester 1966, p 129.

8. Evidence of Marowa, 7th December 1898 HC/M No. 391. Also N.C. Hartley to CNC., 24.5.96, who was aware of the communication between Mashiangombi and "someone" in Matabeleland in connection with the medicine for locusts.

9. Rusize's evidence in the case Regina v Shambawaneza, Ndarina and Dekwende, HC/M no. 252. See also Regina v Kakubi and Dekwende, HC/M no. 253; and **Rhodesia** 4th June 1898.

10. Native Commissioner Kenny, 1st May 1904 N3/14/7. Kenny was highly involved during the revolt and forwarded many intelligence reports to Salisbury.

11. Evidence of Zhanta HC/M 213.

12. Evidence of Tinani, 4 January 1898, HC/M 256. According to the present chief Zvimba this attack was an act of revenge for the shooting of the previous chief Zvimba by one of Inspector Hopper's men in September 1894. Anta, a great hunter, was the present chief's boyhood hero.

13. See George Eva, **Report on a Police visit to Hartleton** (Methodist Archives, London) and Gray, **Opus cit.**

14. Chief Mudzimurema, interview 19.10.68. It is difficult for a white stranger to obtain this kind of sensitive information (if it is to be accurate) from older Africans at the present time.

15. Pemiwa's evidence, HC/M 252; Chivanda, **Opus cit.** and **Rhodesia** 4.6.98.

16. John White to Marshall Hartley, 30.9.96; 9.1.97. For an account of the exciting escape of these teachers and how they were hidden by local people from the soldiers sent from chiefs Sosve and Musarirambi

to cut them down, see Summer H.E. **The Kwenda Story,** NADA 1967 pp 3-5.

17. Ranger, **Opus cit.**

18. The attitude of the Budya chiefs who did not think of themselves as Zezuru, may give a clue to Nenguwo's view of the brewing strife. See Armstrong's report N/1/1/6 and Tendenguwo **The Shona Rebellion in the Mrewa District,** NADA, 1964, pp 4-6. Even today the Nenguwo clan are clear that they are not Zezuru but Budya.

19. Especially from Chivanda, **Opus cit.**

20. Apart from James White, the nearest settler to be killed was de Coy White who had a store on the main Marandellas/Salisbury road about five miles on the Marandellas side of Bromley, about ten miles to the north of Nenguwo. See Hodder-Williams, **Opus cit.** pp 35 and

39. Platt, White's nearest neighbour, escaped.

21. Note the cry of the men as they killed Bremner, "The will of God". Chinenda's evidence, HC/M 243. The fires referred to were seen in Marandellas by Edwards, see his **Reminiscences,** p 72.

22. There are definite time scale difficulties here. As White's farewell note shows, he was killed on Sunday 21st. Edwards (**The Wanoe,** NADA 1926, p 71) says that the warning notes were sent out on Friday and that the repy from White read, "Bremner is here and going into town on Saturday". We can account for Bremner still being at White's on the Sunday by the suggestion of Mrs Moleli that the visitor was sick in bed. See also a discussion in Hodder Williams **Opus cit.** p 34. The messenger later identified the men who had let him through, with the result they were brought to trial. Edwards, **Reminiscances,** p 71.

23. Chivanda, **Opus cit.**

24. Normally wanted for bangles round the ankles, neck and arms.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WITNESS TO MURENGA

The last missionary visit Moleli received was from John White over the Whit Sunday Festival when they "had a most blessed day" and "heard the welcome cry of penitents seeking salvation" at almost every service. Moleli, being the kindly and affectionate man that he was, wished to send his visitor happily on his way according to African custom. So he and many of his congregation accompanied White, singing as they went, for two miles along the road towards the Charter road which White was to take to get to the Njanje stations. He left with an image of their happiness and contentment.[1]

John White was not imperceptive. He was already a fluent linguist and he had a way about him which made it easy for the African people to speak freely to him. He was not the kind of person from whom Moleli's congregation would hide their fears, feelings or information. It can only be assumed that there was much they did not know, for it was part of the insurgent strategy to maintain usual relationships until the trap was sprung, a trap which was devastatingly effective in respect of the one tenth of the total European population[2] who were to be killed and many foreign natives, some of whom had picked up the bad habits of their employers. However, there seems no reason to suppose that the serenity White enjoyed at Nenguwo was deceptive, nor that his conviction that Nenguwo and his people were friendly, was unjustified.

On the other hand it must have been pretty generally known among the Mashona that there had been meetings in the country to discuss the suffering of the people and its causes, and that Chizengeni, for one, had participated in them. Many friendly Shona knew of these discussions and did not hesitate to pass on information in one way or another to white officials who usually discounted it.[3] It seems difficult to believe that the intention of the local Shona to rise was utterly hidden from every Christian as well as the chief himself. The conclusion seems inescapable that the chief, supported by his senior spirit medium, was determined to keep out of the rising for the very reasons that led him to accept

the teacher. They may also have believed the less was said the less likelihood there would be of their being disadvantageously involved. Whilst some of the people under him, like Chizengeni, definitely rejected this decision and others were half hearted about it, the chief did carry those immediately around him and the teacher. There were the people who were glad to hear that "the Matabele were getting the worst of it (the Matabele Rebellion.)[4] Once this was known to Kagubi's messengers, Nenguwo was no longer part of their scheme of inter-communication. This seems to explain Moleli's sense of security and his continuance of his work which obviously at that late stage still had some rewards for him.

In the second week in June the rinderpest was at its height and it was no longer possible to use oxen in the wagons. On his return from the Njanje stations John White secluded the mission wagon and its oxen just off the Charter/Salisbury road at a friendly kraal. He left it under the care of John the wagon driver, a trusted man who had joined the mission from Khama's people, who were the same ethnic group as Moleli's. The lad who led the oxen also stayed with wagon. John White then returned to Salisbury; but on receipt of a telegram from Shimmin asking him to meet him at Charter he collected some donkeys to make the suggested rendezvous with Shimmin who was coming up from Matabeleland via Fort Victoria. From Charter the two men trudged the sixty-five miles to Salisbury, while the donkeys carried their blankets and camping kit.[5]

By that time the first outbreak of violence had occurred. At paramount Mashiangombi's kraal the Native Commissioner at Hartley was killed.[6] The news spread quickly among the Shona and there were other isolated murders; but the event which alarmed the whites and which signalled for them the commencement of the general uprising was the murder of the Norton family at what is now Norton township on Wednesday 17th June 1896. The ensuing period of violence, known historically as the Mashona Rebellion, had begun, and for the Shona in the Marandellas area the knowledge of it was given by hill top fires stretching from Nohwe to Goromonzi and Jeta. The son of Chief Mangwende took the meaning and before the following night was out Bernard Mizeki, the Anglican catechist, was dead, for in the eyes

of those with a will to rise his position vis-a-vis the whites was utterly compromised.[7]

The first victim in the district which lay about Maringari was John White's wagon driver who was killed on Friday 19th and the oxen taken. The boy, the leader of the oxen, managed to evade the attackers and made a pale dash to the nearest protection he could think of, to Moleli, to whom he blurted out his almost incoherent story.[8]

Back in Salisbury the air was full of rumour, and unconfirmed reports flashed hither and thither. While it was not certain that the uprising was general it was obvious that something serious was afoot. Shimmin consulted Ramushu, Moleli's brother-in-law at Epworth, and speedily arranged for warnings to be sent to all the teachers, including Moleli, of the unsettled state of the country, advising them to seek safety. The young man who brought the note to Moleli was Zacchaeus Musonza, a suitor to one of Nenguwo's daughters. He arrived soon after the death of the wagon driver on the Friday evening.

Other warnings were being sent from Marandellas to all the white farmers and traders within the area, including James White on Mendamu farm, three miles to the south west of the mission. While James White's message of local calm was being carried back to Trooper Fitzgerald at the Ruzawi Inn, chief Marondera and his men, living where Nenguwo's clan had once lived, were taking up their positions surrounding that tiny outpost. Within a very short time they were to force the handful of settlers sheltering there to retire to Headlands.[9]

The news Moleli received from Salisbury and from the young boy who had led the wagon was shared with the chief and the men of the congregation. They decided to fortify a strong position in the rocks near Moleli's house so that they could defend themselves.[10]

During that Saturday groups of people who were clearly antagonistic to Moleli and his Christian followers came into Nenguwo's village. Shimmin describes them as "Nenguwo's heathen brothers", suggesting that among them men from Chizengeni were recognized. They threatened to kill Moleli and told him that Salisbury had been wiped out. They also spoke none too gently about the dress of Moleli's congregation and of their succumbing to alien influence, an influence which had dishonoured them and

brought upon them locust, drought, and cattle disease. Those who could not withstand these fierce words put aside their western dress, replacing it with their clay covered cloth, skins, bangles and ndoro in the traditional fashion.

What did this mean to Moleli? His wife was certainly afraid, and beneath his own self-control there must have been misgiving. Nothing showed, however, and he retained his contact with his congregation, especially with those who had resisted the harsh words of the intruders and retained their visible symbols of loyalty to their teacher and friend. Questions must have gone through Moleli's mind. "Will the chief remain loyal to us? Will he take up arms on behalf of these people who have come today? Will the men we have known these years stand the strain"? Being an open man he put the question to them. "Yes, we will stay with you. We will not desert you to join the strangers", they replied. Thus Moleli and his wife were reassured. In this frame of mind the Moleli family spent the night of the 20th, possibly all sleeping in the same hut for safety, while the men who had jeered at and harassed them were in the darkness building up their courage for the final assault.

So it came about that Chizengeni's men were found the next morning about 7 a.m. or 8 a.m. in front of James White's farmhouse asking for brass wire. White asked them to wait a moment, while he went down to the vegetable garden for some purpose. Chinandi, White's house-girl and Nenguwo's daughter, was washing a shirt outside for Bremner and Chizengeni himself was down at the cattle kraal. Bremner, having no sense of danger, had his back to the four men beyond the open door. They suddenly rushed upon him and struck him dead before he could defend himself, using either knob-kerries or battle-axes, and, as they did so, raised the cry, "Praise to God, we have killed the white man"! Chinandi then looked in, expecting to find the white man dead ("For that", she said later, "is Kagubi's law"), which he was. Then the men quickly collected the guns off the racks on the walls.

White heard the cries and hurried back to see what was wrong. He met the men making towards him, by which time they had been joined by the others who came out of hiding and cut off his escape. He picked up a log of wood and used it as a weapon to break through the ranks, and continued his rush even though Ranga discharged his elephant gun at him and hurt him in the arm.

As he broke through Mazani's assegai hit him in the other arm, and just as he reached the door he was hit in the back by a second assegai thrown by Mashonganyika. Once in the house White was able to drive off his assailants with a revolver which they had not found, but not before Kaseke had shot Bremner's horse. In the mean time Chizengeni organised the driving off of the cattle.[11] So they disappeared in the bush, the four men who had killed Bremner arguing among themselves as to who had killed him for the understanding was that the one who had killed a man was to keep his gun. White kept on the alert for a while, but when quietness had settled he composed himself, in great pain, and knowing that he was certain to die from his wounds, to write his farewell letter.[12]

Chinandi,[13] very upset and excited, had already fled before the men left the farm to tell the chief that Chizengeni's soldiers had killed both White and Bremner. This she most certainly believed had happened, for that was Kagubi's law, and she and her father both knew what that meant.

This information came to Moleli from the chief. Moleli did not hesitate, but set off at once to investigate the situation. Shimmin describes James White as Moleli's "great friend", but what this means is not clear. They had the shared experience of being strangers in a strange land. White was Moleli's nearest neighbour and they must have on occasion been of assistance to each other and Moleli was the kind of person who would respond positively to any overture of friendship. It is possible that the unidentified Field Cornet, who had promised to help the teacher when Shimmin had left Moleli at Nenguwo, had been succeeded by White and White may have kept the original promise made by the Field Cornet. On the other hand we know that White was contemptuous of the "niggers", but apparently this contempt did not prevent him from seeking Nenguwo's permission to take his daughter Pari as his concubine. The chief did not accede to this as she was already affianced to Zacchaeus Musonza, the man who had brought the warning note to Moleli. The chief's refusal had led to a rift between him and White.[14] Whatever Moleli's relationship with White, he felt he had to go and see for himself, in spite of his wife's plea that such a move would precipitate action by those same soldiers who had already threatened to take their lives.

On his arrival at the scene he found that White was not dead

as had been reported but alive, though weak from the loss of blood and unable to help himself. Moleli immediately realised that he would have to be moved to a place where he could be cared for. To do this he needed two oxen for the two wheeled scotch cart still on the farm. He set off hastily back to the mission to find the cattle, and obtain help to lift the dying man, knowing full well that he was being watched all the time by men under compelling orders to kill all foreigners (for whether they were black or white, they were simply regarded as *maguwe*). Possibly he hoped that after giving White first aid at the mission they might be able to get through to Marandellas, not knowing that by that time the inn was securely under siege and that long stretches of the road between Umtali and Salisbury were already under insurgent control.

Moleli returned first to the chief to tell him what he had found at White's. The chief agreed to go with him to the homestead, but first they had to collect two oxen. The little boy who had led John White's wagon also helped them, but before the three of them set off Moleli saw his wife. She again expostulated with him, warning that he was putting himself in grave danger by exposing himself and offering this kind of assistance. In one of the few recorded sentences we know he spoke he said, "I am a Christian teacher and must do what is right at all costs". So, driving the oxen, the three of them set off to the wounded man, probably wondering, as they tried to keep the oxen going in the right direction, whether they were being followed.[15] White too, must have been in a condition of uncertainty, peering out of the window as best he could, wondering where the attackers were, whether they would come back, and whether the teacher's assistance would come before they returned. His wounds on his back, arms and forehead were very painful; and when his rescuers at last came, to his relief, he was weak from the loss of blood and from hunger, for he had not yet had breakfast and it was now well on in the afternoon. Before lifting him on to the cart they made some thin porridge and after he had eaten he was lifted gently and made as comfortable as possible for the journey. The road was no more than an unmade veld track strewn with rocks, crossing gullies and the dry beds of several streams. The oxen could hardly by-pass the obstacles on the path and the poor man must have suffered severely from the jerking and jarring

along the three interminable miles, and lost even more of what was left of his precious strength.

In the meantime a group of armed Shona under Chiriseri, knowing what Moleli was doing, had made their way to the mission, there to wait for White to kill him. They gathered outside Moleli's home and Chiriseri, turning to Mrs Moleli, said, "If you give me some money I will let you off". No doubt thinking as much of her family as herself she went into her house and brought out three pounds in silver and three pounds in notes, which she handed over.

At that moment the cry went up, 'They are coming!"

Ready for action, the men moved into positions of advantage. Some of them stood on the granite rocks outside the teacher's house, all of them peering beyond the mission garden where they could see the party making its agonised journey down the slope, along the edge of the field that had in the past been ploughed by James White, across the stream, shuddering to within one hundred yards of the church. Mrs Moleli, dumb with apprehension, watched her husband walk into the death he could not escape. By that time Moleli must have known that men armed with guns were waiting for his arrival.

Chiriseri fired first. "Oh! I have missed", he exclaimed. This shot was the signal for the chief to run for the shelter of the rocks from which position he watched the tragedy unfold. The little boy, facing death for the second time in two days, yet feeling something of the security of Moleli's person and knowing that he had no protection but his, demanded excitedly that Moleli should take the shotgun from his shoulder and fire back. The reply Moleli is reputed to have given, "A gun is not made for killing people", has a ring of authenticity in it. By that time more shots had been fired and the boy fled. In spite of the bullets singing about his ears Moleli held his ground. The reports were by now agitating the now leaderless oxen which were threatening to bolt. Moleli went forward to steady them and in so doing turned his back to the men who were shooting. Just then Tayengwa's shot hit him in the back and he fell. The noise of the firing brought more Shona out of the bush, men hostile to the foreigner. Having only a revolver and being weak and in an awkward position White could do little for himself and though he was a moving target a shot from Chisango killed him. While these grue-

some details were being filled in one of the girls from the school ran down to see her teacher; to her he gave his dying message. "I am ready, and now I am going away. Say good-bye for me to all the people and also to your mother (Mrs Moleli)". This message she managed to get to Mrs Moleli, while Tayengwa took the teacher's gun and Chiriseri took White's revolver.

According to the chief's evidence Moleli was found afterwards to have been shot once in the back and by another shot which smashed in his forehead. If this is so the last shot must have hit him after he had sent his dying message, as he was lying on the ground. It may have been administered at close range by the men taking the guns.

By now, with the sense of victory about them, the emotions of the men had been fanned to uncontrollable flames. They abandoned themselves to their feelings and turned upon the family. First, with cries of "Pupurai Murenga", (Witness to the Spirit of Conflict) and the war-cry of "Murenga weeeeee" Mushangwe, the man from Seki, crushed the skull of the boy Zeccharia with a single blow of his heavy stick. Before Mrs Moleli was herself beaten insensible she saw all four of the children beaten to the ground, two of them never to rise again. All this, in spite of Chiriseri's promise to let her off. By then the remainder of the family friends, including Efa, had scattered in fear into the nearby rocks.

When the white man, the teacher and all the teacher's family were dead, as the soldiers thought, they outspanned the oxen in the cart and collected the mission cattle from the kraal. Being Sunday these had not been released for grazing. Then they set off home, driving the fifteen animals, jubilant in spirit and singing songs of victory; for they believed they had been highly successful in ridding themselves of all the past causes of their consolation, in making it possible for the mythical peace of antecedent years to come again upon them. As they disappeared into the west the sounds of exultation died away, and the quietness of death settled upon the mission station.

But Mrs Moleli was not dead. Long after the shouts of triumph had died, when darkness was covering the scene of tragedy, Mrs Moleli recovered consciousness. Though she was weak and in great pain she struggled up and dragged the limp bodies of her four children into the church. After some time Paulina, her second daughter, recovered also and as soon as she was able to

walk she went into the night to see if she could find Efa. She found her and together they came back to their mother. Emily in the meantime was found to be still breathing. Leaving the two dead children in the church the surviving four made their painful way to their house where Paulina and Efa hid under the bed while Mrs Moleli, with Emily in her arms, lay upon it.

Peace was not to be theirs that night. Presently people, unknown people, began crowding into their house to ransack it, taking clothes, blankets and household utensils. For some time they had probably been jealous of the Moleli family's comparative wealth, and now for the first time they had courage to express it. Fortunately they did not molest the family, the suffering family, who, as soon as the intruders had gone, fled to the laager in the hills which Moleli had prepared the day before, there to wait for the break of day. Mrs Moleli declares emphatically that "none of the Shona came near us", but both Mrs Mafema and Mrs Mangachena claim that that night their mother treated their wounds with hot water before retreating into hiding.

From now on the family was quite alone. The Shona people were afraid to come to them and the men were hesitant to offer assistance.

The next day, stated the chief, he came out to survey the carnage. He dragged the bodies of White and the teacher from where they had fallen, into an ant heap[16] in the long grass. The bodies of the two children also were secreted away there. While he did so the chief's wife and some of the women were there, and their sympathetic wailing gave some small comfort to the family of fugitives in the hill.

For a whole week they lived on pumpkins from Moleli's garden. On the Monday Emily "died" and they buried her in the hill Mutandara about two hundred yards to the south east of Nyachiswa. As the days dragged on and no help came they realised that they could not continue like animals in the forest, without hope, and they decided to try and make for Salisbury. Their enemies had taunted them, saying Salisbury had been wiped out and all the whites killed; for all the family knew this was true. But to get there seemed their only hope. They could get no help from their Shona friends, even those who cherished a genuine love for them, like the chief's wife or Shamu or Musonza. They were all too terrified to help. So the mother and her two daughters set

out to walk to safety, a journey which normally took two days, carrying vegetables for food on the way. Their journey took them through chief Seki's country, and so they hid among the rocks and trees by day to escape detection and walked by night. Soon they came to the Charter/Salisbury telegraph line, which they followed. For the first three days of their journey they had vegetables to eat, but for the remaining four days they had nothing. So it was, almost dead with hunger, thirst, pain and tiredness, with Mrs Moleli carrying her unborn son, they crept into Salisbury[17] laager to tell their bitter but heroic story.[18]

So ended, for those who were left of the Moleli family, the adventure which they had undertaken with such courage and eagerness, believing that in the wild exciting possibilities of Mashonaland they would be serving the purposes of God.

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1. John White to Marshall Hartley. 6.9.96.
2. Figures quoted by Gann, **Opus cit.** p 140.
3. Edwards, **Reminiscences,** p 69, and Native Commissioner Hartley, to Chief Native Commissioner, 24.5.96. N1/1/3.
4. John White to Marshall Hartley 6.9.96.
5. Shimmin to Marshall Hartley, 17.6.96; John White to Marshall Hartley 6.9.96. Had it not been for Shimmin's telegram White would have gone on to James Anta's station and very likely shared his fate. Thus the leading exponent of an African view for the coming four decades in Rhodesia would have been lost.
6. Regina v. Zhanta, HC/M 213.
7. Note the presence of Bennett, a roughly spoken and not very savoury trader doing business not far from Mizeki's station. As a result of an argument about Bennett's property Captain Lendy was sent from Salisbury to settle things and as a result his men shot possibly as many as twenty three of the Mangwende tribesmen. See Farrant, **Opus cit.** p 152. Lendy then used Bernard Mizeki as an interpreter as he gave Mangwende a demonstration and a warning of the power of the maxim gun. Historically this is known as the "Ngomo Affair". Lendy seemed to have done this sort of thing more than once. See Ranger, **Revolt in Rhodesia** 1896-97, pp 64, Lendy's "solution" may have temporarily made traders' goods safe, but in the end some innocent people, like Mizeki, had to bear the brunt of an equally savage response.
8. The framework of the account of the last two days of Moleli's life and of his death have been made up from Shimmin's report, **Our First Martyr,** and from the three trials already mentioned, HC/M nos. 243; 244; 245. References will only be given for material from other

sources. Much local tradition has been omitted, except in cases in which oral information has seemed to illuminate the story.

9. Edwards W. **Marandellas and the '96 Rebellion,** NADA 1923, and Hodder-Williams, **Opus cit.** p 40

10. One strand of tradition says that at that time Moleli thought the danger was from the Ndebele who had been in rebellion since March that year; but there must have been considerable intelligence available to the effect that the Shona were planning a rising. Mrs Moleli reported that Moleli worked alone in preparation of a defence point. As it is not characteristic of the Shona to expose themselves to a threat it seems quite possible that Moleli did in fact work alone.

11. European farmers most likely got their stock by purchasing it from the Native Department which had taken it from the Africans as hut tax. When Africans saw Europeans stocking their farms with cattle taken from Africans they must have assumed that tax was a cover for taking stock from the rightful owners to make the whites rich. Hence Chizengeni considered he had every right to the cattle that he took.

12. Their nearest other neighbour was a man called Platt who lived about four miles from White on the road to Marandellas. He had heeded the warnings and escaped. Hodder-Williams, **Opus cit.,** p 39.

13. Her husband, Shamu, was also beaten and left for dead on the road to Salisbury at this time. He recovered and was protected by Nenguwo. His crime was that he had identified himself too closely with the white settlers. Nenguwo's kindness later paid off after the fighting was over. It was Shamu's evidence which cleared him of any complicity in the killings.

14. E. Marwodzi; Mrs Mafema; interview 3.1.69.

15. In his evidence at both Chiriseri's and Chizengeni's trial the chief claims to have accompanied Moleli on the second journey to White's. In her story Mrs Moleli is emphatic that only Moleli and the boy went there. The chief's evidence is detailed, such as one would expect of an eye-witness; but this does not rule out his having visited the stricken homestead some days afterwards or his having his own motives for giving evidence in the way that he did. Oral tradition says that Moleli was accompanied by several of the Christian men, but this is also rejected for the same reason. For the sake of the story the Chief's version, as found in trial records, will be accepted, with the reservation that there is reason for favouring Mrs Moleli's report.

16. This was probably the pit from which the people obtained their clay for plastering walls and laying floors. It is close to the present Moleli cairn. There is a strong tradition that during this period Mrs Moleli and her children were fed by Nenguwo who also foiled an attempt upon their lives, this time by named persons of his clan and erstwhile church adherents. Mrs Moleli's account of those few days, as given by Shimmin, bears marks of her having gone through a traumatic experience. Her insistence that she received no help from

the Shona may mean that she had been so overcome by feelings of isolation and rejection that repressed fears had come to the surface. The result was that she just could not remember any act of kindness on the part of the Shona.

17. Gauis was born later that year.

18. Even there she was not entirely safe for there was a secret move within the laager, at which the commanding officer connived, to have all the local natives who sought shelter in the laager ejected suddenly one night. Only the prompt action of Shimmin and John White stopped it. Shimmin, report **Our First Martyr.**

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

AFTERMATH

There were no more songs of victory at Maringari. For seven weeks the people lived in silent avoidance of each other, as if apprehensive of some coming disaster. Marandellas was evacuated and neither farmer, trader nor official returned for peaceful residence at least during the next fourteen months. The Mashonaland Detachment of Matabeleland Relief Force, making it's cumbersome way from Charter to Marandellas under the command of Major Watts, was the first sign of movement when it appeared at the Mendamu farm on 27th July. The men set up their laager beside the homestead. This force, consisting of one hundred men and thirteen wagons, had been directed to establish itself at Marandellas and to undertake patrols with view to opening the Umtali/Marandellas road.

The farm was desolate. They found Bremner's body lying on the floor, half under the table, having been pulled off the blanket upon which the chief had seen it. All the contents of the home which were useful to the Shona had been taken and they had left only furniture, such as the table and bed, which did not fit naturally into Shona homes of the time. The horse lay dead outside. The men buried their fellow soldier outside the house and took what they needed from the farm, namely three loads of mule feed, of which they were very short indeed. They were perplexed as to why they did not find White's body, in fact Major Watts never did find out what had happened to it. They did, however, find White's farewell note. Presently the line of wagons moved on and made their next stopping place beside the great tree, the *Muti usina zita.* From that point a well worn native path leading directly to Nenguwo's village ran off the main road (which, incidentally, had been surveyed originally by Selous the famous hunter). The highest point of the complex of hilltop refuges, called Masvingo by the Shona, has been named "Mount Gobos" by Watts' cartographer.[1]

A column like theirs was at a great disadvantage against armed Shona. It was restricted to the road whilst there were vast areas of the hilly countryside which afforded the Shona ample space for retreat, observation positions, and perfect ambush

situations. All the troops could do at this stage was to burn all the kraals adjacent to the road to ensure that their future movement along it would be as little threatened as possible from hostile groups. So they burned down most of Nenguwo's village, not knowing he was friendly, as well as the church and Moleli's home. The previously hidden bodies were not found; and, after watering their animals, meeting some women and taking all the grain and stock they could find (they depended on this kind of foraging for survival), they moved on their way to their first skirmish just outside Marandellas against Muchemwa and chief Marondera.[2] They left behind them the undiscovered tragedy.[3]

Peace came neither quickly nor easily. The men who rose suddenly and unexpectedly soon withdrew after their early successes into an entirely defensive posture. Their carefully laid plans did not go beyond the initial killing of the whites and they had no idea of the resources upon which the latter could draw. The Shona had their caves in which they had learned to evade the marauding Ndebele; the hills and country in which they could hide spread out as far as the horizon, and they had great faith that somehow in a miraculous way total victory would suddenly be theirs. The months drew on, planting and reaping seasons passed unused and to their lot was added the discipline of hunger. It is conceivable that the war would have dragged on for continuing months had the insurgents not believed that the caves were impregnable to the white soldiers also, and had they known of the power of dynamite. The Shona believed that once they surrendered all the men would immediately be killed, for that had at least been the custom in wars with the Ndebele. Therefore they utterly refused to surrender. In the end huge charges of dynamite, weighing up to 2,000 lbs in some cases, were lowered into the caves and all the occupants blown to non-existence.[4] This happened to Sosve's men at the cave Manyepera, a few miles to the south of Nenguwo.

At this point attention need only be drawn to the thoughts of the Shona living as shades in their hitherto impregnable fastnesses. John White records asking a friendly man why the Shona did not sue for peace and was told, "Oh! if the white man thrashed us before, what will they do to us now? It were better for us to remain wild amongst the hills than put ourselves into their hands".[5] In another letter he describes how, at one of the

dynamiting incidents which took place near where he happened to be, he was asked by an officer if he would have a talk with some of the men in the cave to see if he could get them to come out peacefully. White managed to make contact with the men deep in the hillside. They recognised him and spoke freely, saying that they were utterly tired of the war, but entirely without confidence in the promise that they would be safe if they surrendered. Death, they said, would be preferable to surrender. His persuasion having been unsuccessful, White left the white soldiers to their work, not blaming them, but deeply hurt and angry that men in high positions had brought that state of affairs about.[6]

Until August 1897 the mountainous country round Marandellas and Maringari was unsafe for white people. John White's first visit after Moleli's death and his part in securing the laying down of arms is best told in his own words.

> "Three weeks ago I sent messengers to the occupants of the station where Moleli was killed last year. For the last fourteen months they have been living like wild people in the bush. I asked them to meet me and I would accompany them to the government representative that they might surrender to him. They replied saying that if I would come to the deserted station they would meet me there. Until the present this part of the country had been in the hands of th rebels and very unsafe. I sent word for them to meet me there. I had some difficulty to persuade my "Mashona" boys to accompany me. We arrived five days ago. The deserted station had a most desolate appearance. The church, Moleli's house and most of the native huts had been burnt to the ground. I could not but contrast its desolation with its thrifty, pleasant appearance when I last visited in May 1896. Moleli had saved a little money which he had kept hidden in his house; when turning over the debris on the evening of our arrival we found thirty-four pounds in gold which I know his widow and surviving daughters will find very helpful. Two days afterwards we found the now bleached bones of Moleli, the white man he tried to rescue and the three little children who were murdered.[7] Under a large tree close to the spot we dug three graves and reverently laid them to rest . . .[8]
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> "Shortly after our arrival, true to our promise, a number of Nenguwo's men turned up. They seemed very frightened and doubtful of the kind of reception they would have. They assured me that they had no hand in the murder of their teacher; but being powerless to help him they ran away. The next day we walked across to the Native Commissioner to whom they formally surrendered themselves . . . After questioning them he bade them go back, gather their people together and return to the mission station. Two days afterwards a number of them with their wives, children and their impedimenta arrived. They looked so miserable and disconsolate I hardly knew them. Right glad they were to be back again. Today a number of headmen of other kraals came to my place bringing their guns with them. They have an absurd notion in their heads that the Government intends to shoot all the adult males amongst them and asked me to intercede for them."[9]

After a long losing battle the Kagubi medium surrendered on the 27th October 1897. Paramount chiefs Mashonganyika, Kunzwi-Nyandoro, Seki and Sosve laid down their arms. Their resistance to foreign hegemony was now broken and the rule which they had found intolerable was now re-applied. Against it they no longer had any appeal. Their only option was to turn to their own advantage such things as they could and tolerate what they could not. Most of Sosve's men moved away into the Wedza or Chiota districts, far from the scene of their humiliation. The land which had been traditionally theirs was allocated to European farmers.[10] Hut-tax began to be collected as in the past, but under more controlled conditions; and pressed labour again enforced in lieu of tax for the building of the Umtali to Salisbury railway line which was soon to be under way.

When the Company forces had recovered control of the country the men accused of the murder of Moleli, White and Bremner were charged and tried. Chiriseri was sentenced to death for the murder of both Moleli and White; Chizengeni for the murder of Bremner and White; Majani and Mashonganyika were both sentenced to twelve years imprisonment for the attempted murder of White. In spite of a successful prison break sentence was carried out early in 1898.

When Nenguwo returned to his home he was faced with a serious dilemma. His original welcome of the missionary was not

based upon any desire to take into the life of the tribe or into his own any of the alien teaching, but upon a calculation that the presence of the missionary would give to his isolated people some of the security which attached to the teacher's presence, so making them less open to the attacks which were liable to be mounted at any time from chief Seki's area. When the nation-wide revolt failed he knew for certain he would at least enjoy relief from threatened attack. But what to do about the Christian teacher? His wish to be physically secure was linked with his wish to continue to enjoy a full relationship with the ancestral spirits and the traditional way of life consequent upon that relationship.

Chief Zvaitapasi Nenguwo resolved the problem by petitioning the Government to be allowed to move away. Permission was granted and in 1898 they moved to a spot about twelve miles to the south west. The Synod comments, possibly neither kind or deep-seeing, were as follows, "the old chief was finding the new way inconvenient, but he had left the best of his people behind him."[11] This was the last move in a long history of a lonely and bitter fight on the part of the successive Nenguwo chieftains to find settled peace in ancestral faith, after over one hundred years of disagreement, division, flight and faction fighting. Thus in the southern half of what is now the Chiota Communal Land they found, if not the peace of completely free men, at least freedom from the fear of attack and freedom to think and believe as they wished. Their old homeland was made over to the mission by the Company.

Not all Zvaitapasi's followers saw the problem in his way. At the outset of the violence the Christian congregation had been scattered in the blind vehemence of attack and counter attack; but they did not forget what Moleli had meant to them as a person. When they were reasonably settled, their huts rebuilt and crops growing in their fields and gardens, they asked the visiting missionary for a teacher to be sent to them again; for they wanted to continue learning in the way they had done before. In 1898 Evangelist Tutani, one of Moleli's original colleagues, rebuilt the mission house near the fig tree and the children, with their parents' support, came willingly again to school.

The missionaries remained satisfied that British rule had come to stay and that British justice, when properly practised, would

put the Shona into a far better position than they could otherwise have expected. This they maintained, in spite of the strains of the revolt, during which time even Isaac Shimmin, the friend and devoted admirer of Rhodes, began to have doubts about the ostensible guiltlessness of the Chartered Company's policy makers. "My opinions," he wrote to his Committee in London, "had better remain in the sacred seclusion of your desk . . . I have posted none of our letters in Salisbury for we honestly think the authorities would claim a right to open any suspicious envelope in times like these."[12] However, in spite of the largely unspoken, but sometimes open, tension between the missionaries and the Company the former welcomed the settlement, for it implied a hope in the future in which the church could devote its energies to the "winning of the Mashona for Christ."

The war in Mashonaland made it clear to the Shona that the white settlers had come to stay and that the final political authority was theirs. As a result major changes came about; but for this study the most important was that the teaching of the church found much wider acceptance among the indigenous people, for the authority of the paramount chiefs had been largely replaced by that of the settlers. Having collected the scattered congregations and re-opened the schools, the missionaries' great problem was one of teacher supply. The previous policy of bringing in men from the south had the dual disadvantages of expense and the uncertainty of how long the men would stay in a strange country so far from home. The Methodists therefore committed themselves, early in 1898, and with the consent of the Home Committee, to commence a local teaching scheme. For this purpose they selected Nenguwo's station, the scene of Moleli's heroic work and death. A new missionary, Oswald Brigg, was appointed as resident missionary and given the task of building a house for the first tutor of the proposed Institution.

In the meanwhile John White lived a sort of nomadic life, travelling around the country by ox-wagon, superintending existing schools. While oxen rested during the heat of the day he sheltered either under a friendly tree or found shade beneath the wagon, where, with the help of Jonas Chiota,[13] he translated the gospel according to St Mark into Shona. In this way he produced the first Shona text book to be used in the new training school.

Thus armed John White, as the first head of the training

school, admitted his first six students in January 1900. Jonas Chiota, Petros Luwanika and James Kamera, all married men, stayed the course but before the end of the year the other three, all single men, had left. The teaching proceeded in a large mud hut, used also as a church, built a little way from Moleli's site. The students themselves lived in small Shona style round huts. In these simple buildings and in this handful of men were embodied the highest of future hopes. Parallel to the training school was the day school for the local children.

The curriculum was simple, mainly a study of the Bible with translation. White's method was to read a passage from the Xhosa Bible, and explain it. The students then joined in discussion and would try to find Shona words equivalent to the Xhosa ones. Some arithmetic was also taught and they wrote on slates. On the practical side they tended the mission cattle from which they obtained milk, they ploughed the mission fields from which they obtained maize, and made bricks for the proposed church-cum-classroom. On Sundays they went out on foot to conduct services in nearby villages.[14] "As soon as we could read and write we were sent out to teach", relates John Melusi.[15]

White's plan of campaign was identical to that of Shimmin's. Through trained teachers placed in central areas, church members were to be carefully taught and from there they would be encouraged to evangelise surrounding areas. Schools were to be established as an essential part of the church work. Thanks to Nengubo Training Institution training programme, there were over 1,000 children in Methodist schools by 1905.

Both time and events moved apace. Standards rose. By the end of 1910 Patrick Gusha had passed Standard five and was studying professional teaching methods in the evening. In 1912 forty-five student teachers were receiving training and in that year agriculture courses were added. In 1915, with an eye still to the future and through the generosity of the Methodist Centenary Fund, a large spacious teaching block was opened, also boarding hostels, of then modern design, to accommodate one hundred boys and one hundred girls. This latter point was particularly important, for up to that time the Shona were deeply reluctant to allow girls into school and in fact there was not one female boarder in the school. Staff and the variety of courses increased. The school name was changed to Waddilove in honour of the

man who had made the development possible by providing most of the money.

In this way the school entered into the colonial period at its height. Over the years much devotion was poured into it; its reputation spread and it attracted students from lands as far away as Kenya, the Congo, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, and South Africa. In its own indirect and unintentional way it has done much within the borders of Zimbabwe to keep alive the hope of freedom cherished by many of the people in Mashonaland to whom Moleli and his fellows originally came ninety years ago.

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1. A mis-hearing of the word, "Nenguwo", but enough to show the troops did contact local people.

2. Major Watts, **An Account of the operation in which the Mashonaland Detatchment of the Matabeleland Relief Force were Engaged,** which is found as Chapter 12 of Plumer, H. **An Irregular Corps in Matebeleland,** (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd. London 1897.) It also contains a map of the Nenguwo area.

3. In the Nenguwo area one of the members of the column had come across a woman nursing the child of a man who had been killed in the uprising the previous month. As an act of kindness this person, probably an officer, took the child, for she may still have been in danger. She remained as part of his household throughout his service and until he settled in the northern Transvaal. When she was of marriageable age she left the home of her protector and lived in the Lydenberg or Mafeking area. She did not marry.
One day when she was washing at a river she was annoyed to find a man looking at her. He would not go away, but insisted on asking her where she came from and saying she looked like someone he knew. She could not tell very much of her past.
It turned out that this man, a Methodist minister, Revd. Jeremiah Thabani was married to Talitha, Moleli's eldest daughter, and as such could recognise the family likeness. Eventually he brought her to Mpahlele where she was given the chance to pick out her mother from the group of women there. This she did, to the accompaniment of many tears and joy.
So Emily, who died and was buried in Mutandara Hill in Mashonaland came to life again, in a latter day resurrection.
This story has been given by the late E. Tsolo.

4. Hodder Williams, **Opus cit.,** p 48 and Edwards, Wiri, **Reminiscences** p 90.

5. John White to Marshall Hartley, 30.9.96.
6. John White to Marshall Hartley. 30.4.97.
7. He never knew the story of Emily.
8. The fig tree under which the victims were buried still stands.
9. John White to Marshall Hartley, 12.8.97. On this last point see Ranger, **Opus cit.**, pp 278-281 for an account of how chief Makoni surrendered only to be immediately tried by a military court and shot. This was intended to make the Shona surrender more quickly, but it had the opposite effect. Knowledge of what had happened quickly spread among the Shona.
10. Hodder-Williams, **Opus cit.**, p 51.
11. Minutes of the Synod of the Mashonaland District of the Methodist Church, 1898.
12. Shimmin report. **The Mashona Rebellion.**
13. As a little boy Jonas had been carried off by the Ndebele from his home near present day Salisbury. In exile he had contacted a missionary and had learned to read Xhosa as well as speak Ndebele, a language very similar to Xhosa. His knowledge of both Shona and Xhosa was invaluable in the translation exercise.
14. John Jena, student at Nenguwo Training Institution 1901-1903. Interview 16.7.67. I asked him, "John, of all the lessons John White taught you, which moved your heart most?" After careful thought he replied, "The spelling lessons"!
15. John Samuriwo Melusi, student at Nenguwo 1906-09. Interview April 1965.

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2. Phani Shamuyedove who with the Rwere sisters completes the group of the last surviving persons who remember Moleli at Nenguwo.
3. Chief Gideon Mutambiri Nenguwo, nephew of the original Chief Zwaitapasi Nenguwo, on the subject of the **Muti usina zita** and tribal spirit.
4. Headman Matiza, who was born in Nenguwo's village but did not remember Moleli personally.
5. Chief Nyandoro who gave information about customs and about the **Muti usina zita.**
6. Winnie Maragu who came up from the south as the wife of an evangelist in 1893. Her mind was failing at the time of the interview.
7. John Jena, who as a little boy responded to the preaching of Josiah Ramushu in the Gambisa District and who recalls what life was like in those days and the impression the first white men made upon him.
8. Mrs Maria Luwanika (nee Mudimu) who knew Moleli at Epworth village, but not at Nenguwo.
9. Patrick Gonzo Guzha, formerly Chairman of the Senate of Chiefs in Rhodesia. He remembers Shimmin and James Anta who taught at his home in the Lomagundi district. He gives an independent confirmation of the report sent in by George Eva. His own father was shot by Inspector Hopper.
10. Chief Mudzimurema, who gave information on the rebellion of 1896.
11. Headman Chizengeni, who gave details of the history of his clan.

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APPENDIX

EMILY'S STORY[1]

On the Monday after the death of her husband Mrs Moleli's youngest child, Emily, died and was buried in the hill Mutandara. The family then fled to Salisbury.

But Emily was hot dead and after a time recovered sufficient strength to creep out of her tomb. In her semi-conscious state she thought her father was with her and she imagined him taking her down to the stream to drink. It seemed as if he would not let her take his hand. When they got there her father disappeared. Later a Shona woman found her there and took her to her hiding place where she nursed her. So Emily recovered.

When the troop under Major Watts penetrated the area at the end of the following July they discovered this woman, either at the watering point or on a reconnaissance round. She was nursing a child which was not her own, but the child of a man who had been killed in the uprising. An unknown, kindly person probably an officer took the girl for she was obviously still in danger, and after his service in Mashonaland was complete he kept her in his household as nursemaid/playmate for his children. When she was old enough to be married she left the home of her protector. According to her family, however, she never did marry.

Whether she settled in Lydenberg or Mafeking is not certain, but one day, as was her custom, she went down to the river to wash. Whilst there she was annoyed to find a man peering at her. After she had expostulated with him he suddenly turned to her and said, "You look like somebody I know. Whose child are you?" He went on to say that he knew two girls who had come down from Mashonaland whom she resembled. And she was able to tell him that she too had come from Mashonaland where she had lost her family, except for her father with whom she had lost contact.

This man who had stumbled on Emily whilst looking for his horse contacted Revd Thabani who brought her to a meeting at Mpahlele. There she was given the chance to pick out her mother from a group of other women. This she did, to the accompaniment of emotions too deep for an outsider to describe.

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1. The only firm evidence for this story is Mrs Moleli's statement that Emily died, was buried and left at Nenguwo; that soldiers from Major Watt's column contacted the Nenguwo clan; that sometime later the Revd Jeremiah Thabani, the husband of Moleli's eldest daughter, was instrumental in re-uniting Mrs Moleli and Emily at Mpahlele in the Transvaal.

Informants have not been able to give the names of the persons who cared for her; nor have they been able to give the date of the re-union; nor is it clear where she was found just prior to her being identified. Some of the details of the story given by members of her family are contradictory, but the basis for the account given here is that given by Emily herself to Mr E. Tsolo in 1956. Since then she has died. See the **Waddilove Papers.**

Shimmin's Pioneer Journey from Salisbury to Nenguwo and Gambisa.

From: McDonald, **Opus Cit.**